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GUITAR TRICKS

DIGITAL EDITION

JUNE
JULY

LEARN ***THE LOW STRING*** RUMBLE

JIMMY PAGE

A GUIDED TOUR OF ***THE REMASTERED ZEPPELIN*** CATALOGUE

SOUND ADVICE FROM A **DOOBIE BROTHER**

JOHN **PETRUCCI** ON ***PURPLE RAIN*** AND ***ALL NIGHT JAMS***

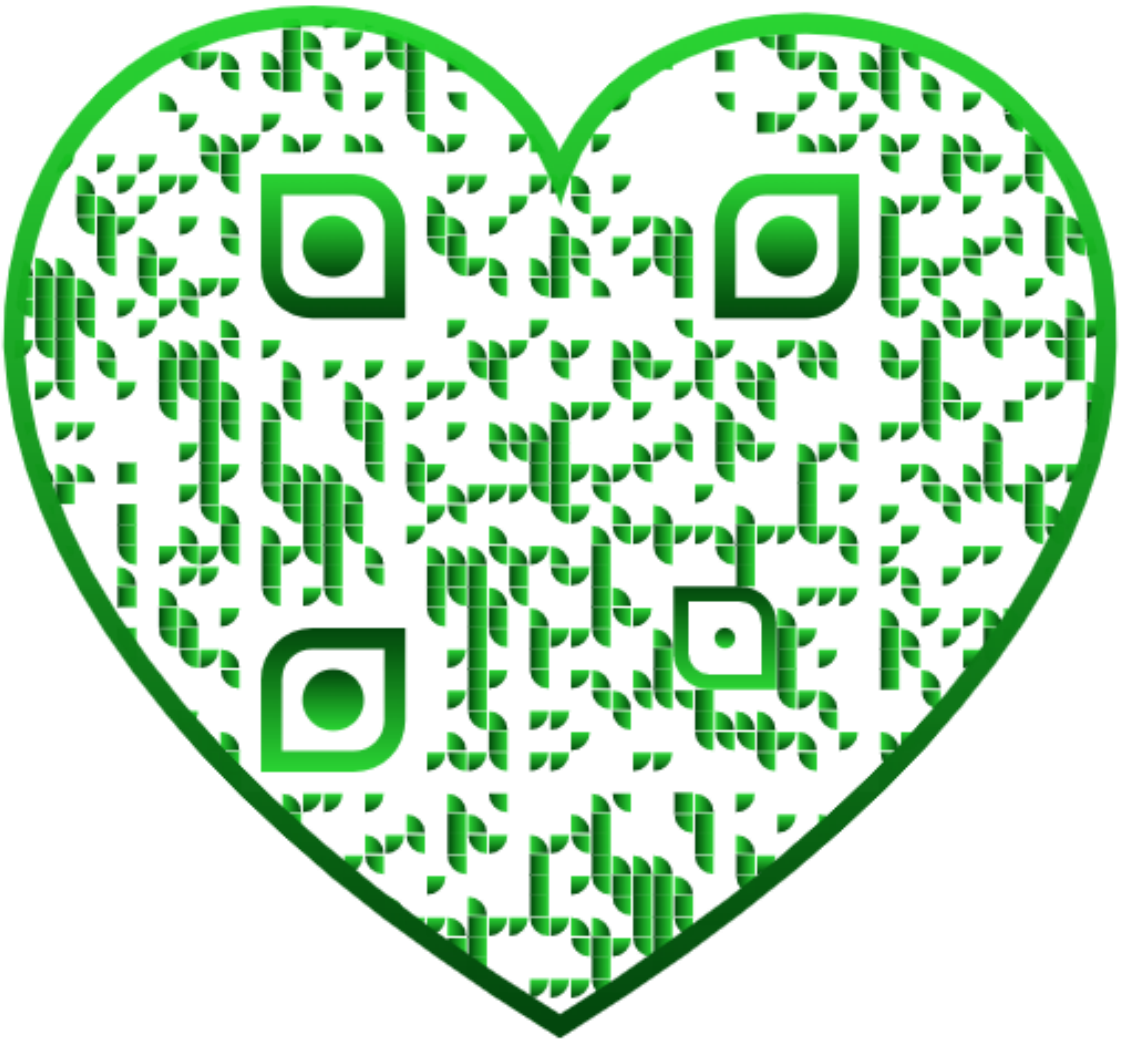
Photo by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons

TIPS FOR **8** ***BUYING*** AN **ACOUSTIC GUITAR**

+

PRODUCT REVIEWS: **GUILD / ORANGE / EPIPHONE / ELECTRO HARMONIX**

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN ON REHEARSING AND RECORDING



4. Essential Albums

Kirk Hammett and Joe Satriani pick albums for your collection.

Joe Satriani by Neil Zlozower
Kirk Hammett by Ken Settle Atlas Icons

24. Sound Advice

Patrick Simmons on how random explorations fuel creative vocabulary.

Pat Simmons by Robert Knight

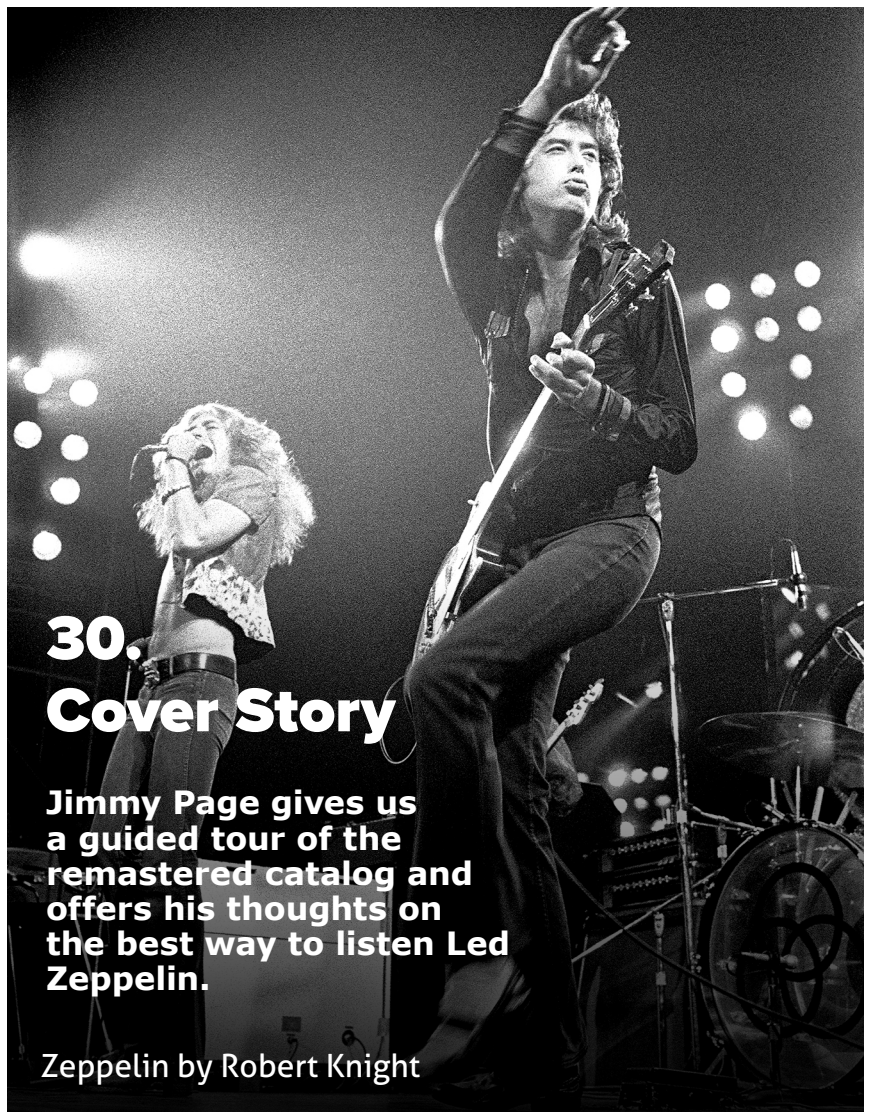
12. Riffing

Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons give The Beatles a kiss.

KISS Gene and Paul Larry Marano Atlas Icons

30. Cover Story

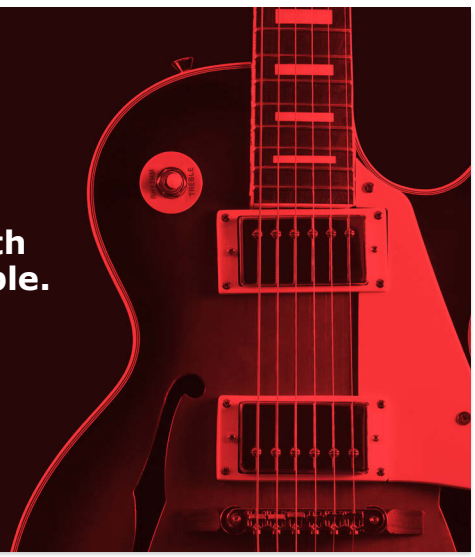
Jimmy Page gives us a guided tour of the remastered catalog and offers his thoughts on the best way to listen Led Zeppelin.



Zeppelin by Robert Knight

14. Nuggets

Name that Tune with the low string rumble.



18. Classic Corner

John Petrucci recalls how early house jams on "Purple Rain" lead to the *Guitar Battle* recording and the G3 tour.

John Petrucci by William Hames Atlas Icons

40. Listen Hear

Listen to Stevie Ray Vaughan talk about how the band gets ready to record and what really happens when the red light switches on.

Stevie Ray Vaughan by Rick Gould

46.
On Songwriting

Roger McGuinn tells the story of The Byrds.

Roger McGuinn by Paul Natkin

52.
8 Tips for Buying an Acoustic Guitar

Here's what you need to know.

58.
Gear Reviews

Guitar Gear worth looking into featuring: Electro-Harmonix's "B9" effects pedal, Epiphone's "Standard Les Paul PlusTop PRO" electric guitar, Orange's "Dual Dark 50" amp head, and Guild's 12-string acoustic "F-1512E" from the Westerly Collection.

56.
Video Lesson: Rock Guitar

Jimmy Page artist study.

72.
Why Paul Gilbert wants to be Todd Rundgren

Paul Gilbert by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons

57.
Video Lesson: Acoustic Guitar

Campfire Chords with Character.

73.
Feedback Form

KIRK HAMMETT

by **John Stix**

Metallica Kirk Hammett by Chris Schwegler Atlas Icons

01.

The Hunger
Soundtrack

Get it on iTunes

02.

Strangers in the Night
UFO

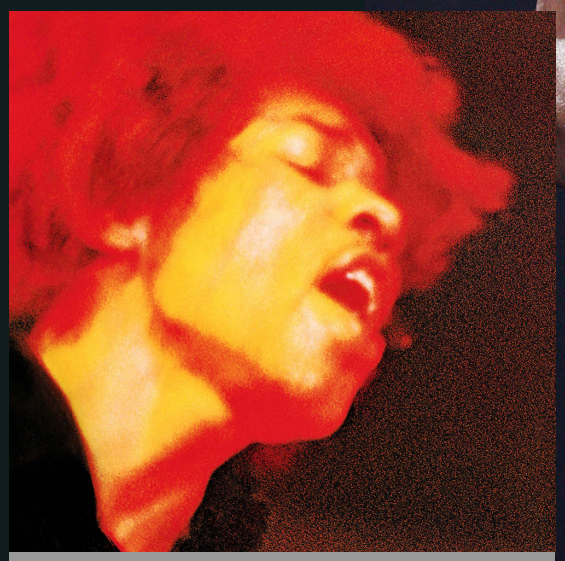
Get it on iTunes

We all remember our favorite teacher – someone who believed in us, gave us support, and encouraged us to take up wings and fly. For a 21-year-old Kirk Hammett it was his guitar teacher, Joe Satriani, who provided the foundation to start his career as a hard rock guitar hero. "A lesson with Joe was not just guitar," Hammett remembers. "We'd touch on other subjects, too. We'd speak a lot about Eastern philosophies. I started taking lessons from Joe in 1982 right before *Kill Em' All*. I had taken maybe 10 lessons from him. I had learned about modes and chord theory and scale theory and a lot of licks here and there. We would play together and he would play a lick and I would totally cop it. I wouldn't tell him. I'd just go home and the second I got home I'd break out my guitar and work out this lick that I had seen him play. I would sit down and map out what keys and what scales could be used over what chord. "As the student became the teacher, we asked Kirk to select some essential albums:

03.

Ziggy Stardust
David Bowie

Get it on iTunes



04.

Electric Ladyland
The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Get it on iTunes

Metallica Kirk Hammett by Ken Settle Atlas Icons

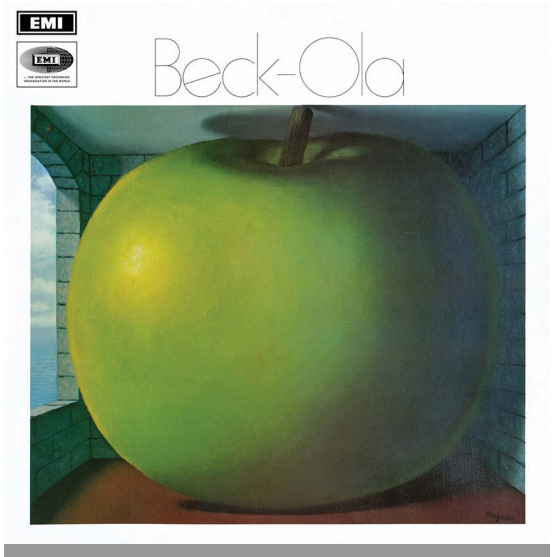
“One album that had a major impact on me when I was younger was UFO’s *Strangers in the Night*. That was the beginning of the end. I mean wow. There’s all these outrageous guitar solos. From a personal standpoint I think that album had a lot for me, for what my tastes were at the time. In that particular period, right when he did the last UFO albums and the first two Michael Schenker Group albums, I thought he was playing his most melodic. It’s quintessential. Michael Schenker was a huge influence on me. His guitar playing had a lot of energy and his phrasing fit what he was doing – fit what UFO was doing at the time.”

Metallica 1988 Kirk Hammett
by Eddie Malluk Atlas Icons

05.

Truth
Jeff Beck

Get it on iTunes



06.

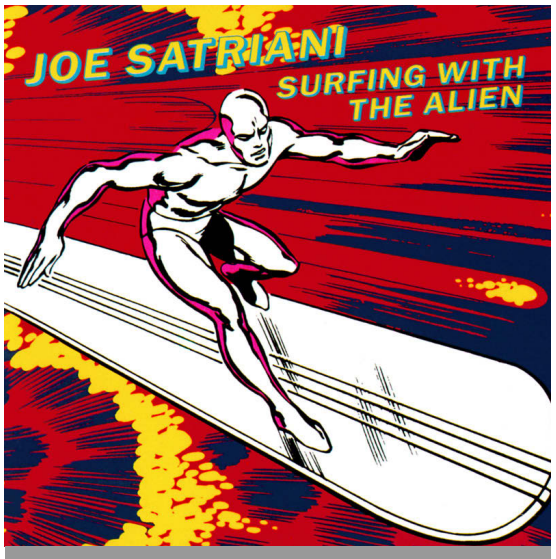
Beck-Ola
Jeff Beck

Get it on iTunes

07.

Wired
Jeff Beck

Get it on iTunes



08.

Surfing with the Alien
Joe Satriani

Get it on iTunes

Joe Satriani combines equal parts enormous knowledge of music and skill with heart and creative vision. Toss in his penchant for "everyman" melodies and love for barroom boogies, Satriani was able to make Jeff Becks' Blow by Blow audience his own. Satriani has released 15 instrumental albums with the latest being Shockwave Supernova. Here is Joe's recipe for your listening and learning pleasure.

Joe Satriani 2010 photo by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons

JOE SATRIANI

by **John Stix**

Let's start with the first three Hendrix albums because he was alive then. I would say *Band of Gypsies*, too, because "Machine gun" had the feature of modern guitar on it.

01.

Are You Experienced

The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Get it on iTunes

02.

Axis: Bold as Love

The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Get it on iTunes

03.

Electric Ladyland

The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Get it on iTunes

PORTRAITS IN TONE

Richie Kotzen

"The great thing about the RK5 Fly Rig is that I now have my ideal pedalboard with the effects I use most, which is reverb, delay and overdrive, in a tiny little box that I can literally put in my backpack. So I'm carrying my guitar rig, for the most part, in my backpack.

"What makes the RK5 so different from the standard Fly Rig is the overdrive circuit. This is something that Andrew [Barta, president of Tech 21] and I spent a good 6 months designing --going back and forth, trying to verbalize what audio qualities I wanted. And finally we came to what we call the OMG section.

Actual size: 11.5"l x 2.5"w x 1.25"h • Weight: 18.6 oz.

"The thing that's really cool about it is Andrew put in the SansAmp. And what that enables you to do is literally revoice any amp. I can plug into a really clean amp and get my sound the same way I can plug into a dirty amp and get my sound. So you can get a great sound live through an amp, and, if the amp goes down, by using the Sans-Amp, you can literally plug right into the PA and get a fantastic guitar tone.

"Beyond putting the RK5 in front of an amp, you can also use it direct. I took this pedal into the studio for The Winery Dogs 'Hot Streak' record. There's a song, in particular, called 'The Lamb,' with a middle solo section where you can really hear the Tech 21 RK5 direct.

"So this pedal is very versatile, it's very convenient, extremely reliable, built to perfection."

-- Richie Kotzen

Photo by Michael Mechnig

The Richie Kotzen OMG Signature Overdrive is also available as a stand-alone pedal.

RK5 FLY RIG®

TECH 21

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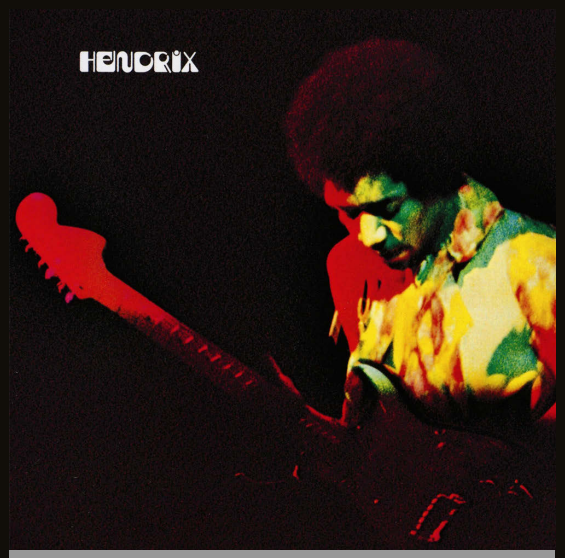


04.

Band of Gypsys
Jimi Hendrix

Get it on iTunes

06.

Flex-Able
Steve Vai

Get it on iTunes

08.

Revolver
The Beatles

Get it on iTunes

05.

Wired
Jeff Beck

Get it on iTunes

07.

Back in Black
AC/DC

Get it on iTunes

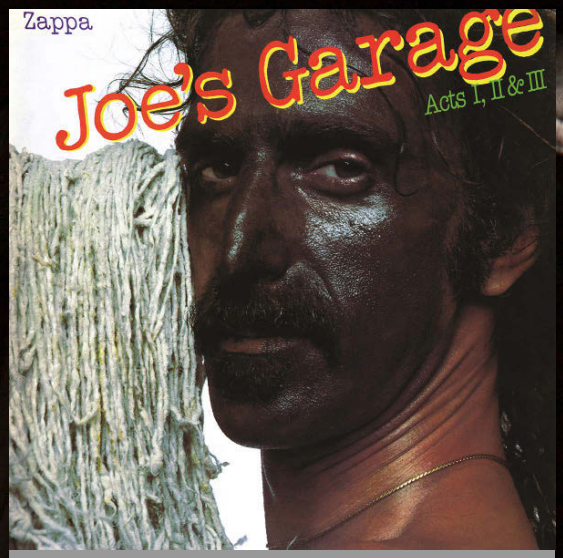
09.

Stand Up
Jethro Tull

Get it on iTunes

I'd have to pick a **Beatles** record. I'm torn between ***Revolver***, ***The White Album***, and ***Rubber Soul***. ■

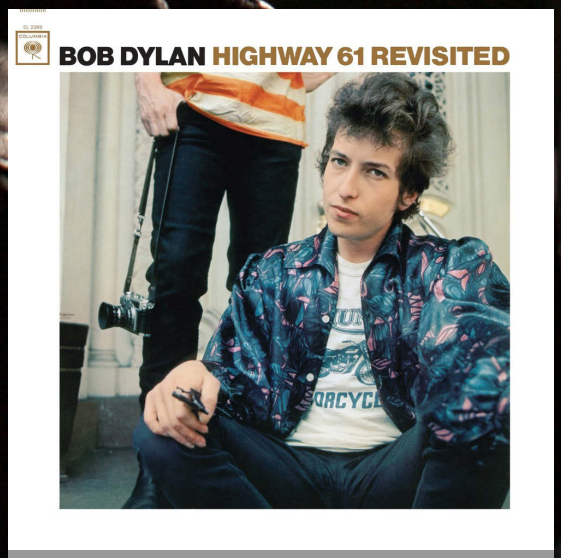
Joe Satriani 2015 Photo by Justin Borucki Atlas Icons



10.

Joe's Garage I, II & III
Frank Zappa

Get it on iTunes



11.

Highway 61 Revisited
Bob Dylan

Get it on iTunes

12.

The Hunger
Soundtrack

Get it on iTunes

PAUL STANLEY AND GENE SIMMONS ON "IN MY LIFE" FROM *RUBBER SOUL* BY THE BEATLES

by **John Stix**

KISS Paul by Larry Marano Atlas Icons

I thought that *Rubber Soul* was a turning point for The Beatles. I remember picking up the album and thinking oh, *they are acoustic*. John had on a suede, blue jean jacket and I thought *oh, they are becoming Woodstock hip*. The first time I listened to the album I remember thinking *oh, these are great songs*. These can be as sparse as they are. And the writing is so brilliant that there is more power because there is less there. "Norwegian Wood," "In My Life" – if somebody came in here now and sat with a guitar and said, "listen to what I just wrote," you would think the new Messiah had come. It's not about four guys playing, or special effects, or synthesizers, guitar wizardry, two-handed technique, or any of that nonsense. It's about a great song. Once again, it shows that's the bottom line. The rest of it is nothing without the great song. The great song alone will stand by itself; but the playing without a great song is meaningless. **Paul**

KISS Gene by Larry Marano Atlas Icons

"THE BEATLES WERE THE PERFECT UNIT. THEY HAD CHARISMA CROSSED WITH TALENT CROSSED WITH GENIUS MUSICAL SONGWRITING. THEY ARE THE BEST POPULAR SONGWRITERS OF ALL TIME. PERIOD."
– GENE SIMMONS

Favorite band of all time. Heavy metal, schmeby metal, thrash bash, clash. They all pale. There is nobody like them. I don't care if anybody says Black Sabbath is my favorite band or Lenny Kravitz. Everybody has to step in back of The Beatles. That includes Elvis. Elvis never wrote a song in his life that anybody cared about. He had charisma and was a star. The Beatles were the perfect unit. They had charisma crossed with talent crossed with genius musical songwriting. They are the best popular songwriters of all time. Period. "In My Life" is brilliant. It's astonishing. When you say one of The Beatles' songs it may not be one of your favorite songs. Take "In My Life" and give it to Yes and that will be the best song they ever wrote. The Beatles' worst song would be any other band's dream song. **Gene**

In My Life – The Beatles

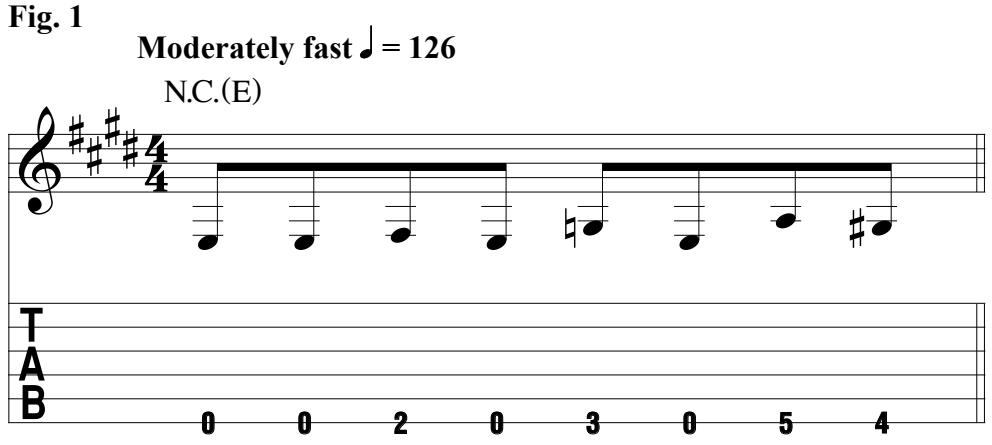
As the major precursor of rock music, early blues guitar riffs were by necessity played on the bass strings of acoustic guitars in order to be heard in the company of other instruments. Consequently, as electric blues and rock and roll further developed following WWII, guitarists appropriated the coolest bass string blues riffs and literally "amped" them to powerful, crunching iconic motifs. Note the variety in this select group. Can you name the inspiration for each?

NUGGETS: BASS STRING RIFFS

By **Dave Rubin**

Fig. 1 was often one of the first riffs guitarists and bassists learned back in the '60s. This popular detective show's theme song from the late '50s composed by Henry Mancini was rocked by Duane Eddy for one of his typical bass string classics. Bonus: George Harrison once said Eddy's deep chested low E string always sounded like it was an octave below everyone else's. Check out the way the line contains both the b3rd (G) and major 3rd (G#) – just like a 7# 9 "Hendrix" chord.

Fig. 1



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Flautist Ian Anderson & Co. created a unique hybrid style of rock in the ’60s combining blues with British folk music. With the critical contribution of the unsung rock guitar hero Martin Barre and his nasty blues scale riff in **Fig. 2**, the band hit their early stride with a concept album about a “poor old sod.”

Fig. 2

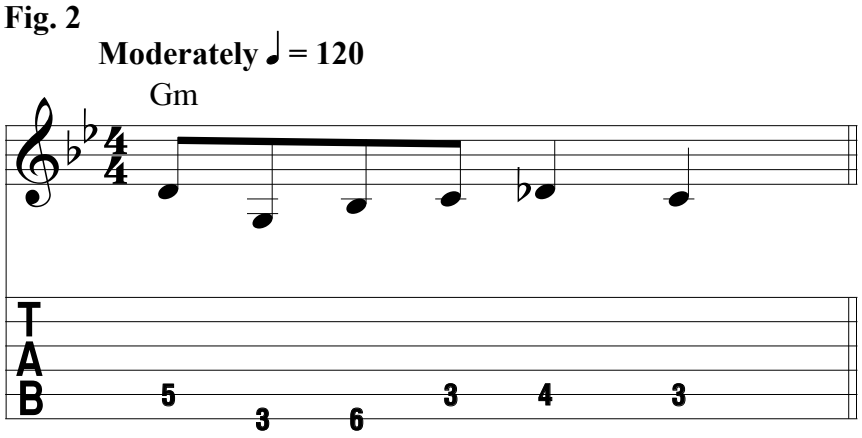
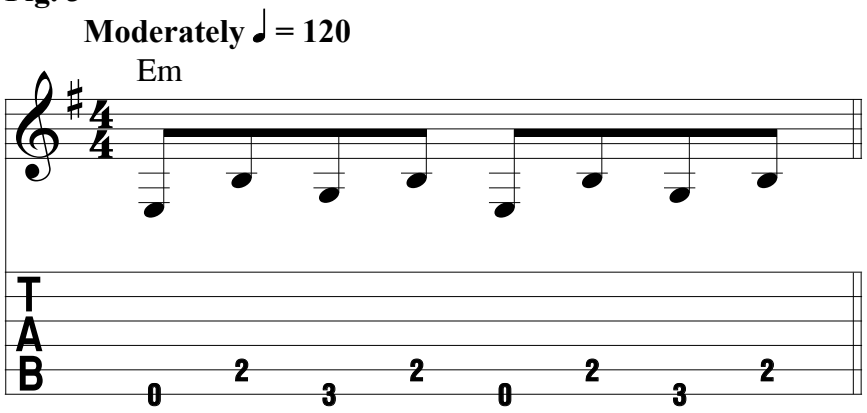


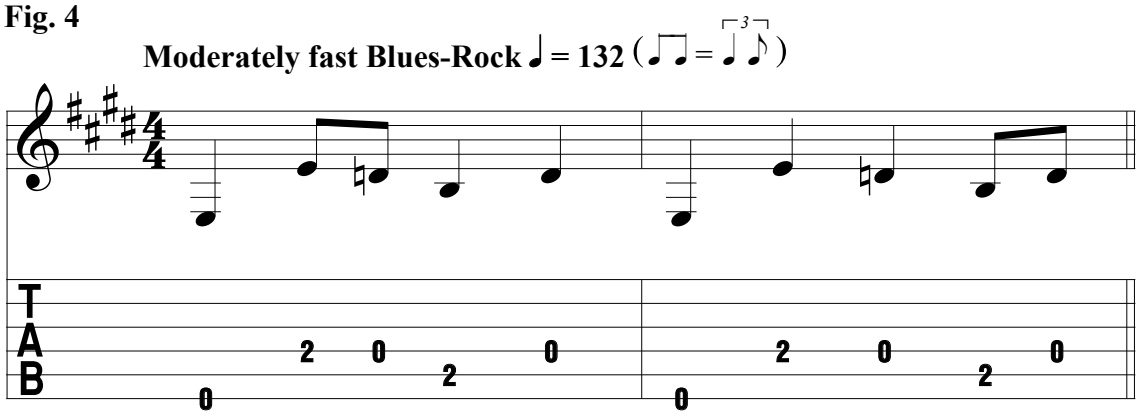
Fig. 3



Surf rock was a much beloved genre in the early ’60s when instrumental music could still crash pop charts. A pioneering Southern California group had a hit in 1963 with a tune named for a wave phenomenon. Their minor key rhythm riff in **Fig. 3** is known as an Alberti bass in classical music.

The arguably ultimate heavy blues-rock band helmed by guitarist extraordinaire Jimmy Page led the competition in 1969 with their debut album. **Fig. 4** acknowledges an early Howlin’ Wolf compositionwith a pounding E minor pentatonic riff that can be cycled hypnotically and almost infinitely.

Fig. 4



Along with teaching private lessons in NYC, **Dave Rubin** has written over 100 blues, classic rock, jazz, and country guitar books for the Hal Leonard Corporation. His latest is Inside Rock Guitar: Four Decades of the Greatest Electric Rock Guitarists.
www.musicdispatch.com

With a biblical name, this ’70s Scottish hard rock group featuring guitarist Manny Charlton forged a classic blues-rock riff with **Fig. 5** for a hit track with a title that is never sung. Taken to be a reference to a popular hangover cure, it was originally “heir” – hence the vocal hook “son of a bitch.” Bonus: Play the G note on string 4 at fret 5 with the pinky, pulling up slightly to access the “true blue note” between the G and G#.

Fig. 5

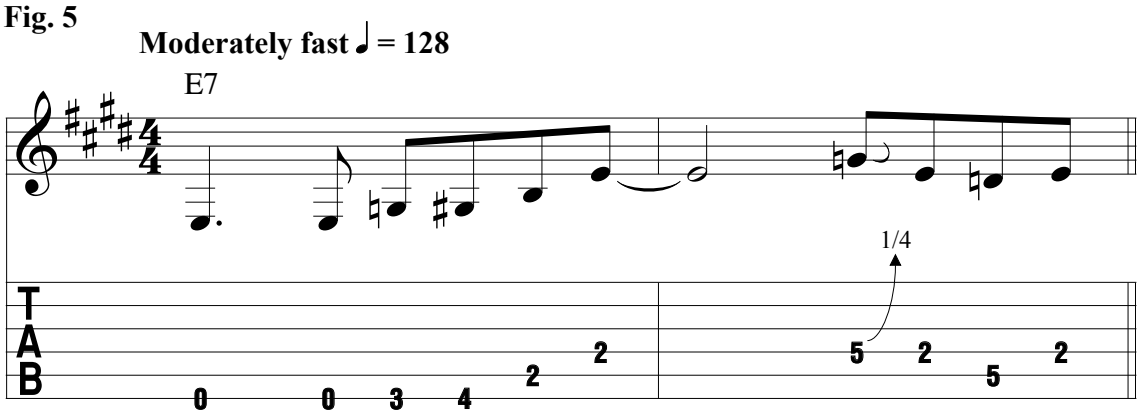
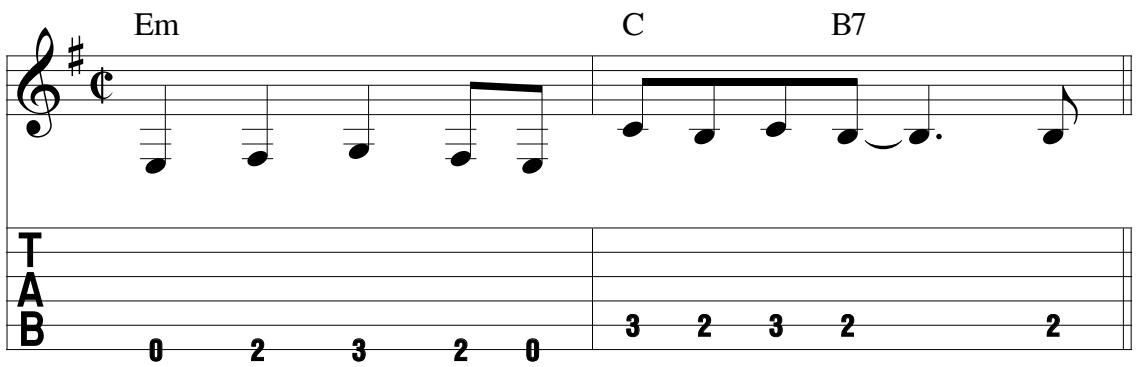


Fig. 6



Named for a beehive hairdo resembling the nose cone of a gigantic US nuclear bomber, this new wave group’s first hit in 1978 was a red-hot number sporting the clever riff in **Fig. 6**. The notes are derived from the E Aeolian mode, aka the natural minor scale.

The occult has long played a part in blues and blues-based pop music from the earliest recordings. From the E minor pentatonic scale, **Fig. 7** is a section of a song that was originally written for Jeff Beck as a single for his debut album with Bogert & Appice in lieu of payment for his guest appearance on the album of a certain Motown singer/songwriter/keyboardist/harmonica player. However, with the power trio’s album delayed, Motown head honcho Berry Gordy opted to release this artist’s version first, and it became his second #1 single

Fig. 7

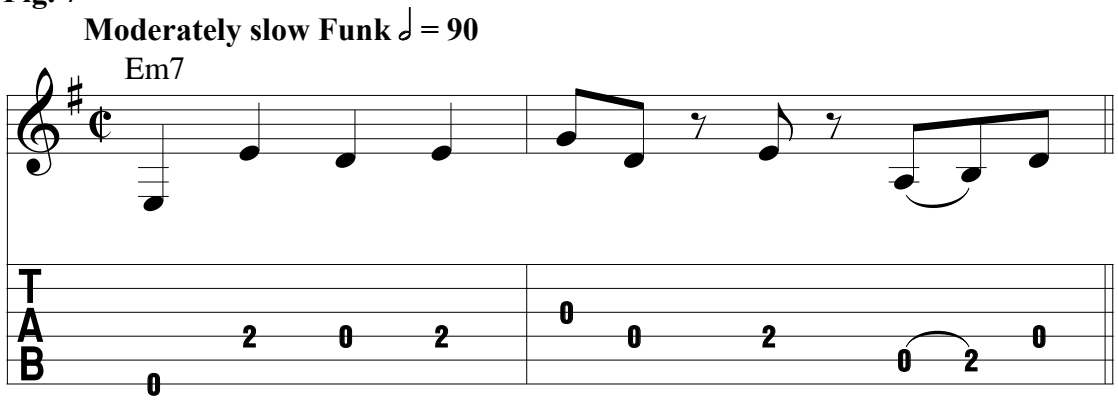


FIG. 1	“PETER GUNN”	FIG. 5	“HAIR OF THE DOG”
FIG. 2	“AQUALUNG”	FIG. 6	“ROCK LOBSTER”
FIG. 3	“PIPELINE”	FIG. 7	“SUPERSTITION”
FIG. 4	“HOW MANY MORE TIMES”		

JOHN PETRUCCI ON *PURPLE RAIN*

by John Stix

The Guitar Battle recording was dreamed up at the 1996 NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) show in Anaheim. With the sight of so many world class guitar players, Nat Kusano from Shinko Music Japan and I came up with the idea of multiple guitarists performing on various songs. Each guitarist would be given the spotlight to play melodies, fills, and solos alongside their fellow bandmates. The players were Reb Beach, Brad Gillis, Michael Lee Firkins, George Lynch, Danny Miranda (bass), Steve Morse, John O' Reilly (drums), John Petrucci, and Al Pitrelli.

Dream Theater's John Petrucci cemented "Purple Rain" into the lineup as it was one of his favorite songs he used to jam to. The inclusion of "Purple Rain" was an easy sell because I remembered my own similarly endless jams to Grand Funk's version of The Animals' "Inside Looking Out." When Prince died I went back to this recording only to discover that John Petrucci had gone on to perform it again – most impressively at the Musicians Institute. It reminded me that when the writing is great, the chances are vastly improved that the speech will be eloquent. And Prince was a great writer.

John Petrucci is currently on the road with Dream Theater showcasing their newest album, *The Astonishing*. When I told him it reminded me of a Broadway show, he lit up saying, "We wrote it as a show. It's our version of a Broadway rock opera. It's a live band scoring a movie type of things. It's all those things in one so it's creatively very satisfying to say the least." But for GTI he had no problem looking back to one of his earliest satisfying moments.

"Purple Rain" has a special place in your development as a player.

That was one of them. Going back to Kevin Moore (John's childhood buddy and DT's original keyboard player) when we were growing up – one of the things that we loved to do was constantly jam. I believe that helped me as a young player. It really helped me with my improvisation – helped me with my ear. We would have jam sessions at our houses or we would go

"It was great for the ear, great for improvisational skills, great for your ability to play with other musicians in different settings."

John Petrucci 2 by William Hames Atlas Icons

to friend's houses. There were all different pockets of musicians. There were Deadheads, and metalheads, and Rushheads, and everything else. Most of the time, it was just the two of us. One of the things that we loved doing was to veg out on these chord progressions that were cool. We'd do that with Pink Floyd and with The Doors. Kevin was really into on The Doors. I remember doing "Roadhouse Blues." You just had to play that. "L.A. Woman" – that kind of era. "Riders on the Storm." Floyd, we would kind of do the *Dark Side of the Moon* era, *The Wall* era. A great one is of course "Comfortably Numb." That is something I have done many times. I have done it as a professional – Dream Theater has done it. It is one of those highly influential guitar solos that so many players, certainly myself, used in developing an expressive melodic side to my playing. And at that time the *Purple Rain* movie came out and that song was really popular. It was just this great, melodic progression to play too. We would literally trade solos for hours. We would jam on that progression over and over and over. It was great for the ear, great for improvisational skills, great for your ability to play with other musicians in different settings.

GUITAR BATTLE – *PURPLE RAIN*

0:00-1:03	John Petrucci
1:04-1:38	Al Pitrelli
1:39-2:05	Andy Timmons
2:05-2:12	Andy Timmons & Al Pitrelli
2:13-2:46	Brad Gillis
2:46-3:13	John Petrucci
3:14-3:20	John Petrucci & Brad Gillis
3:21-4:25	Brad Gillis
4:26-5:01	Andy Timmons
5:02-5:35	Al Pitrelli
5:36-6:44	John Petrucci
6:45-7:11	Al Pitrelli
7:12- end	Andy Timmons,John Petrucci, Brad Gillis, Andy Timmons, Al Pitrelli

Purple Rain from the Guitar Battle recordings featuring Brad Gillis, Al Pitrelli, John Petrucci, and Andy Timmons.

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What do you remember about recording *The Guitar Battle* version of "Purple Rain"?

In finding out that you and I were going to talk and listening back to it, I kind of forgot a bunch of things. I forgot we were all trading solos and I had my part. And some guys were doing the melodies and some guys were improvising. You had Brad Gillis on there and Andy Timmons. Al Pitrelli was on there, as well. It brought back memories hearing everybody's take and everybody's different tones. When you hear guitar players playing on a single song like that back-to-back, it really demonstrates how there are so many voices you can have on that instrument. There are so many different ways to manipulate the strings and the tone to make it your own. You can really hear that on this.

Like you said, it's a great song to play on.

It's such a beautiful progression. It's really simple but I really like it. I tried to use the different melodic motifs that Prince originally put in there, to kind of pay tribute to the actual song. It also reminds me growing up I was a big fan of Journey and Neal's playing. Again, it's that same side where there's a very melodic chord progression and his guitar playing is a blend of fiery technique and rock playing, but also really super tear-jerking melodic lines. "Mother Father," "Faithfully" – songs like that. In fact, I think I did a little bit of "Faithfully" in the MI version. I think I snuck some in there. But it's that same kind of thing I was talking about with Gilmour, with Neal. I love that side – the super, pulling-on-your-heartstrings, melodic, rock guitar playing.

Since our recording I've seen videos of you playing it at a NAMM show and at Musicians Institute (using the *Guitar Battle* track). What I love about the one from MI is that it shows the full range of your expressiveness, technique, emotion, and your melodic invention. In other words it was a guitar masterpiece and you played it masterfully.

John Petrucci by Rick Gould

First of all, thank you. I appreciate it, John. It was a long time ago. It kind of stemmed from all the things that we were just talking about. It's being comfortable playing on a progression like that for a long period of time and sort of exploring different opportunities. As I was watching that, too, I thought to myself it was kind of a foreshadowing of what I would eventually do with some solo material outside of Dream Theater and with G3. It's being in a situation where the guitar is carrying all those things you said. You're playing the melody. You're improvising. You're really providing all of the focal point and attention as a single guitar player. And of course that's what Joe (Satriani) does so well, and Steve Vai, and Eric Johnson, and all the other players that I played with. But I didn't have a bunch of experience with that as a solo artist until I started doing G3. But that little MI thing is definitely a foreshadowing. That was something that I guess I had the ability to do and the desire to do as a guitar player – to take on all those musical elements in one full song. ■

"It was just this great melodic progression to play too. We would literally trade solos for hours."

Dream Theater John Petrucci by Ken Settle Atlas Icons

Sound Advice - Patrick Simmons

(The Doobie Brothers)

BY JOHN STIX

The Doobie Brothers will forever be linked with the San Francisco sound – a sound that had also spawned The Grateful Dead, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Big Brother and the Holding Company, Jefferson Airplane, and The Moby Grape. But Patrick Simmons, a founding member/guitarist and composer of favorites like "Black Water" and "Echoes of Love," has an even stronger link to folk giants like Doc Watson, Rev. Gary Davis, and The Kingston Trio. Here he talks about his early days with the guitar and gives us some sound advice on exploring beyond what you know.

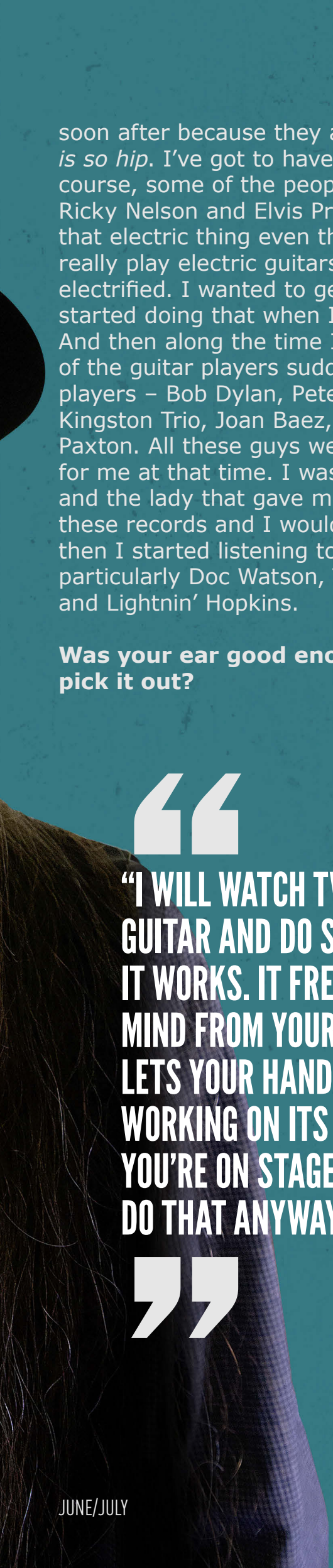
I think you are an acoustic folk picker who picked up an electric.

That's absolutely true. Except that I based my guitar playing originally in country guitar. I started on acoustic. Then I started playing electric soon after because my neighbors were these people in a country western band. They all had old Harmony guitars with an F-hole archtop – the most uncomfortable guitars to play. They used Black Diamond strings, which were like telephone wires. The strings were up a mile off the board. Talk about calluses. I started playing electric

Patrick Simmons by Robert Knight

soon after because they all did. I thought *this is so hip*. I've got to have an electric guitar. Of course, some of the people in those days, like Ricky Nelson and Elvis Presley, were all doing that electric thing even though they didn't really play electric guitars. But their bands were electrified. I wanted to get into that mode. I started doing that when I was pretty young. And then along the time I hit high school, a lot of the guitar players suddenly were acoustic players – Bob Dylan, Peter Paul and Mary, The Kingston Trio, Joan Baez, Doc Watson, Tom Paxton. All these guys were taking center stage for me at that time. I was taking guitar lessons and the lady that gave me guitar lessons had all these records and I would listen to them. And then I started listening to country and blues – particularly Doc Watson, The Rev. Gary Davis, and Lightnin' Hopkins.

Was your ear good enough that you could pick it out?



"I WILL WATCH TV WITH MY GUITAR AND DO SCALES AND IT WORKS. IT FREES YOUR MIND FROM YOUR HAND AND LETS YOUR HAND DO A LOT OF WORKING ON ITS OWN. WHEN YOU'RE ON STAGE YOU HAVE TO DO THAT ANYWAY."

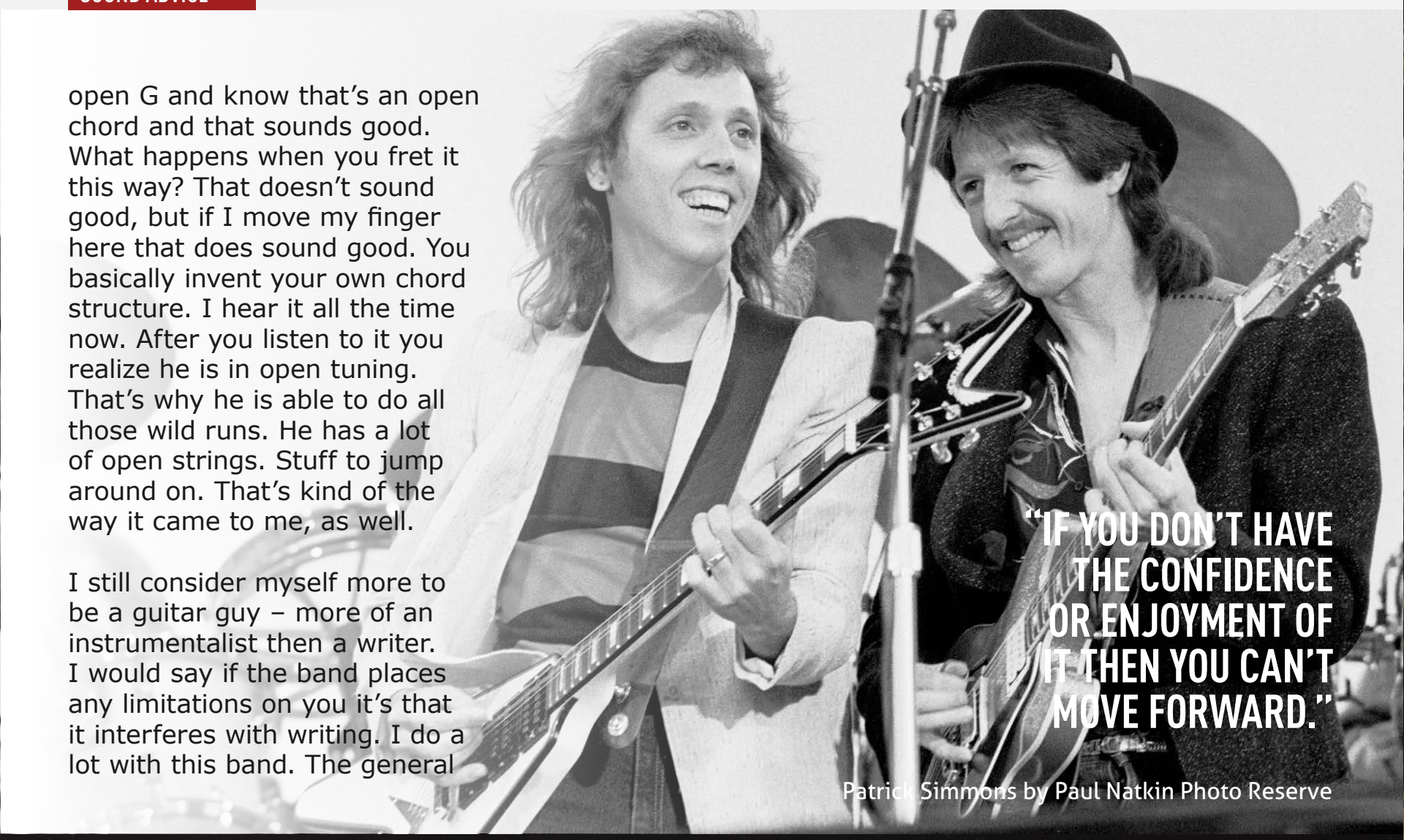
I had been really into Chet Atkins, who to me was the master of styles. When I started hearing these people playing acoustic guitar – doing a lot of neat picking – I took that thing that Chet Atkins was and I sort of applied that style to acoustic, which is kind of what those people were doing, too. It's that sort of Nashville picking or Carter style. I like to sing, too, which was the difference between Chet Atkins and a guy like Doc Watson. I really liked that combination of being able to pick and back yourself on guitar and sing. And so I put the electric guitar away. I just said I don't want to play electric anymore. I want get back to the roots of guitar. I want to be like Doc Watson. Then I heard Jorma Kaukonen. He used to play around San Jose. I thought, *man, this is it*. This guy has reached the pinnacle of what I want to do. I want to be a country blues kind of based guitar player and I want to sing this blues.

Were you naturally good? When you played did it sound musical or did you work hard to make it flow?

I had been playing at that point since I was about eight years old. By the time I was 15 I had been playing seven years, so I had a little bit of ability in that direction. Bill Payne (Little Feat) once told me when he gives lessons to kids he doesn't discourage them from just plunking around on the piano. Even if they just make noise – if it's music to them – if they are enjoying it and they feel some feedback from that, I encourage that. I encourage people to invent and try things on their own. Because from that comes the enjoyment of the music that you invented yourself to the point where, once you have confidence in that, then you can learn other styles and other techniques. If you don't have the confidence or enjoyment of it then you can't move forward. So I realized of course – that's my philosophy, too, on the guitar. Naturally you want it to be musical. But that perception of music doesn't come immediately except probably to a genius like Mozart. Most people have to experiment and make noise a little bit until from that noise you start to recognize music and noise as two distinctly different things. By experimenting, it did come in a natural way. I would tune to an

open G and know that's an open chord and that sounds good. What happens when you fret it this way? That doesn't sound good, but if I move my finger here that does sound good. You basically invent your own chord structure. I hear it all the time now. After you listen to it you realize he is in open tuning. That's why he is able to do all those wild runs. He has a lot of open strings. Stuff to jump around on. That's kind of the way it came to me, as well.

I still consider myself more to be a guitar guy – more of an instrumentalist then a writer. I would say if the band places any limitations on you it's that it interferes with writing. I do a lot with this band. The general



"IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE CONFIDENCE OR ENJOYMENT OF IT THEN YOU CAN'T MOVE FORWARD."

Patrick Simmons by Paul Natkin Photo Reserve

"Black Water" by The Doobie Brothers

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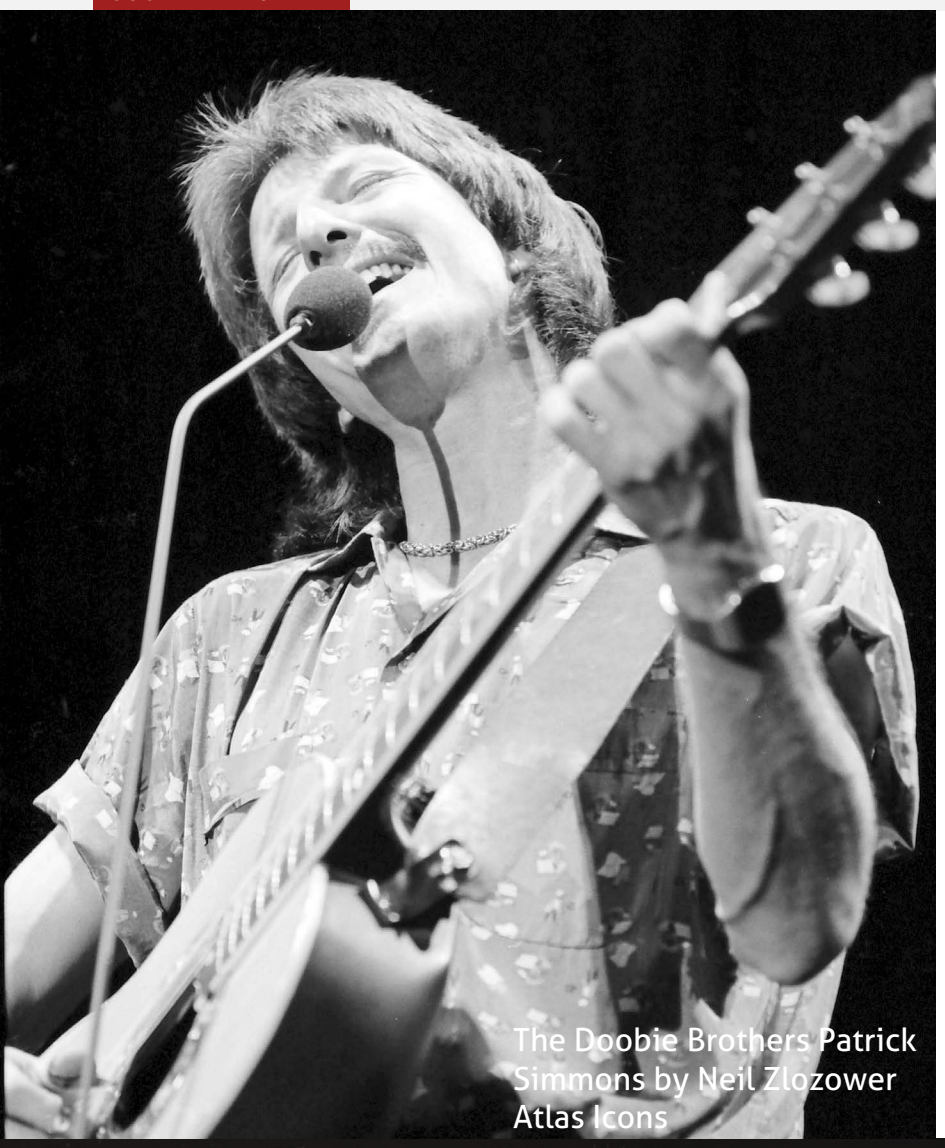

The Doobie Brothers Patrick Simmons by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons

duties, travel, rehearsing – if it interferes with anything it interferes with writing. As far as playing I can sit around in a room. That's kind of what I do. I got something from Steve Morse that really helped me. Steve sits with his guitar and does scales all the time. I spent some time at his house for a few days and every night he would watch MASH (the TV show) and play the most amazing scales. He'll sit there and talk to you. He is so amazing he can use different parts of his brain for different things. I admire that so much I started doing that. I will watch TV with my guitar and do scales and it works. It frees your mind from your hand and lets your hand do a lot of working on its own. When you're on stage you have to do that anyway. You are singing and playing and sometimes your mind wanders, but you always want to be able to play your part. It really helps to do that – not to mention your agility. Thank Steve for that one. He is a hard guy to admire because he is far above the realm of most of us. I can't even begin. ■

"Echoes of Love" by The Doobie Brothers

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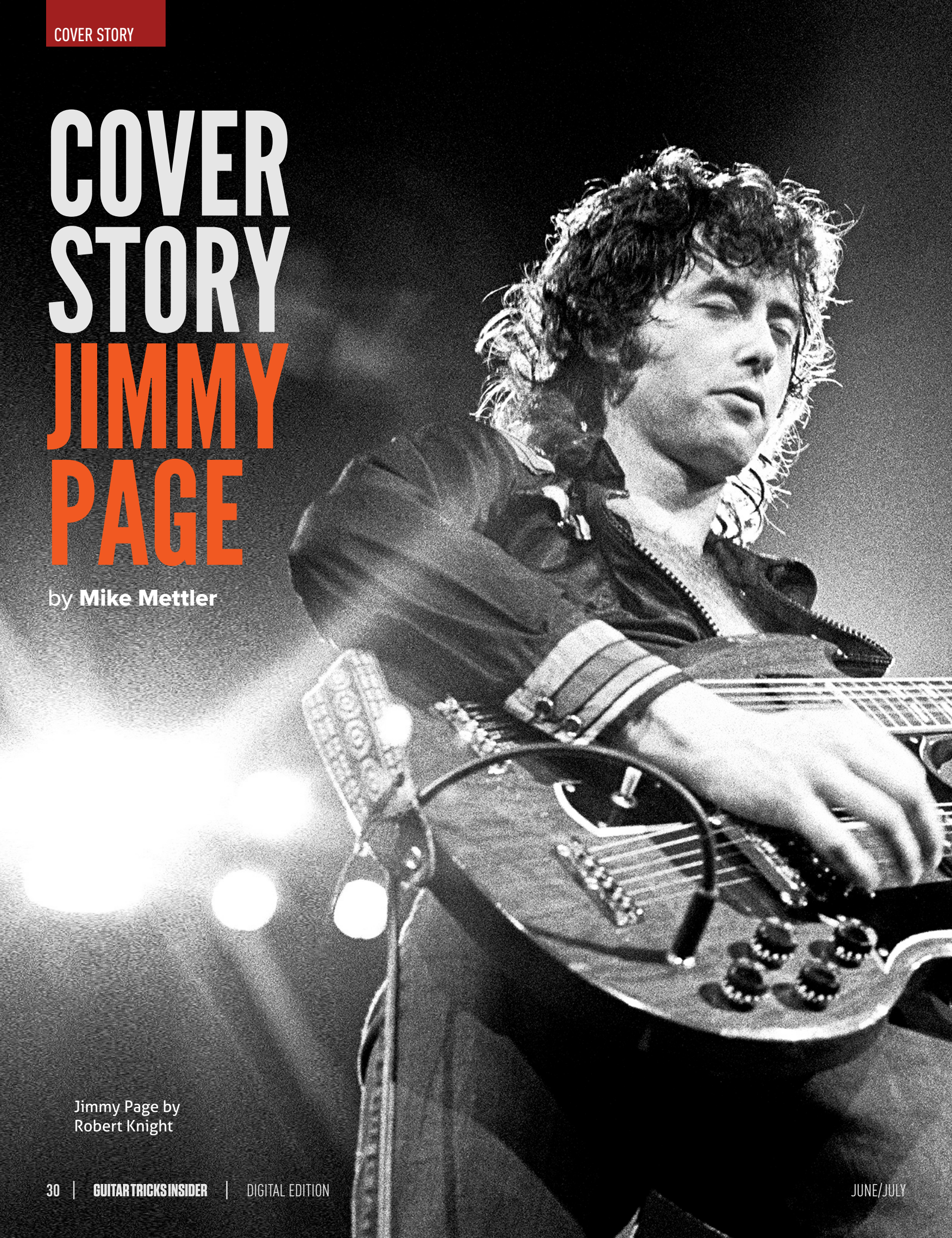
COVER STORY JIMMY PAGE

by **Mike Mettler**



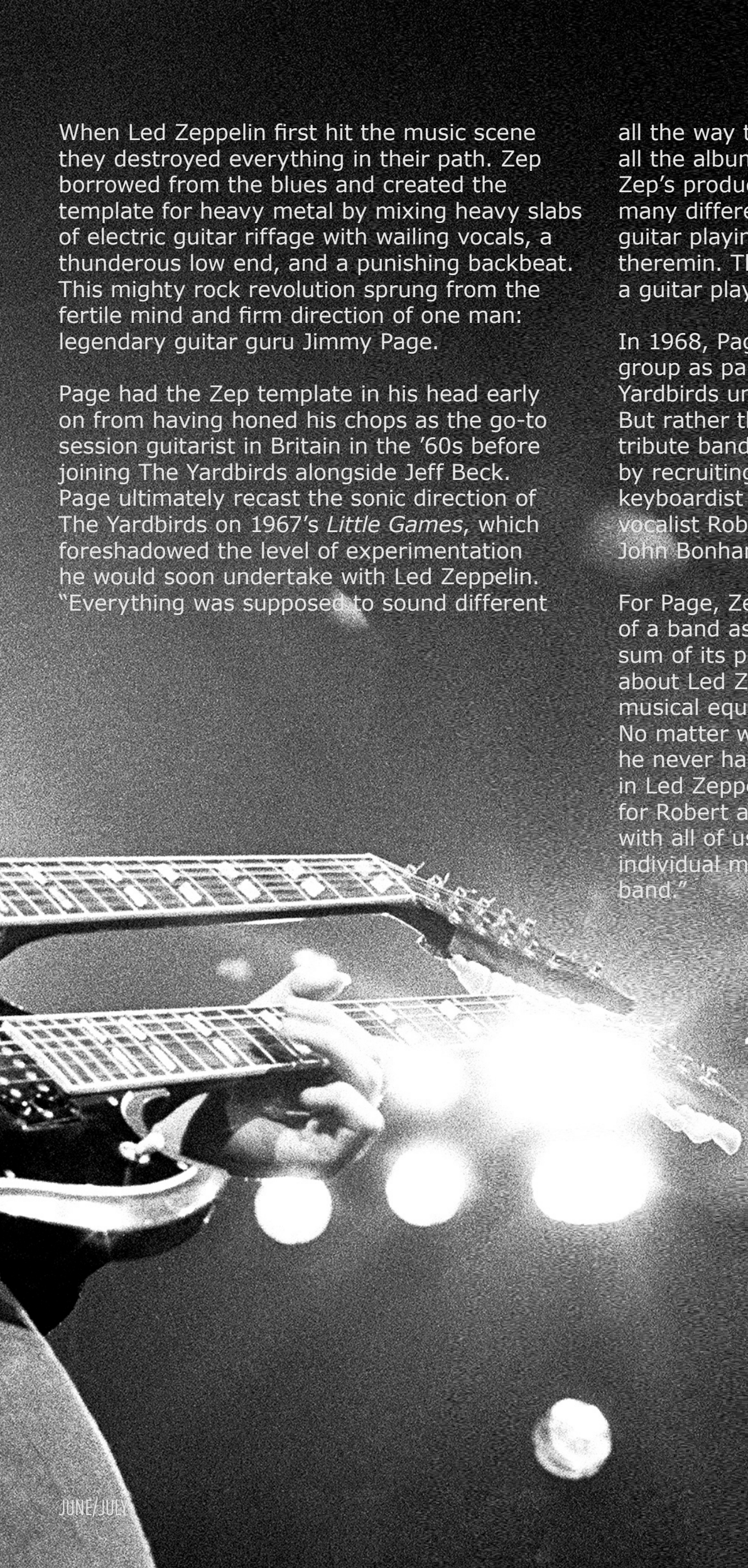
Jimmy Page by Robert Knight

When Led Zeppelin first hit the music scene they destroyed everything in their path. Zep borrowed from the blues and created the template for heavy metal by mixing heavy slabs of electric guitar riffage with wailing vocals, a thunderous low end, and a punishing backbeat. This mighty rock revolution sprung from the fertile mind and firm direction of one man: legendary guitar guru Jimmy Page.

Page had the Zep template in his head early on from having honed his chops as the go-to session guitarist in Britain in the ’60s before joining The Yardbirds alongside Jeff Beck. Page ultimately recast the sonic direction of The Yardbirds on 1967’s *Little Games*, which foreshadowed the level of experimentation he would soon undertake with Led Zeppelin. “Everything was supposed to sound different all the way through – from beginning to end of all the albums,” Page says of his philosophy as Zep’s producer and lead guitarist. “So I tried many different styles and approaches to my guitar playing including acoustic, 12-string, and theremin. That was all basically my character as a guitar player.”

In 1968, Page had put together a four-man group as part of a commitment to honor The Yardbirds under the moniker The New Yardbirds. But rather than employing a faux Yardbirds tribute band, Page created something else by recruiting fellow session maven bassist/keyboardist John Paul Jones, banshee blues vocalist Robert Plant, and powerhouse drummer John Bonham. Thus, Led Zeppelin was forged.

For Page, Zeppelin was the perfect example of a band as a whole being greater than the sum of its parts: “The most important thing about Led Zeppelin is that each of us was musical equals. There’s no doubt about that. No matter what John Bonham had done before, he never had the opportunity to play like he did in Led Zeppelin; and it was exactly the same for Robert and John Paul Jones. It’s the same with all of us, actually. Although we were great individual musicians, we also played so well as a band.”



“THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT LED ZEPPELIN IS THAT EACH OF US WAS MUSICAL EQUALS. THERE’S NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT... ALTHOUGH WE WERE GREAT INDIVIDUAL MUSICIANS, WE ALSO PLAYED SO WELL AS A BAND.”

Page reached for new heights on his fretboard with the help of that tight-but-loose band structure. “This was the vehicle to be able to just go for the stratosphere with my guitar playing. I felt pretty positive about what I was doing. We each knew we’d never heard anything like this before. And so that was it – everyone came onboard and we started working with it. That’s what’s reflected so well in all of the studio material. We continued to push things because we had the ability to do so. I mean, who knew what was beyond the next horizon?” It turns out, beyond that horizon was the wherewithal to create dive-bombing, Sunburst 1958 Les Paul Standard riffs, and intertwine them with a squealing theremin in the free-form section of “Whole Lotta Love” (*Led Zeppelin II*, 1969), to hammer out the now-iconic 1959 Fender Telecaster solo that climbs to the stars in the back half of “Stairway to Heaven” (*Led Zeppelin IV*, a.k.a. *Zoso*, 1971), to conjure the DADGAD-tuned middle-Eastern dirge of “Kashmir” (*Physical Graffiti*, 1975),

“What is and What Should Never Be” - Led Zeppelin live at Albert Hall

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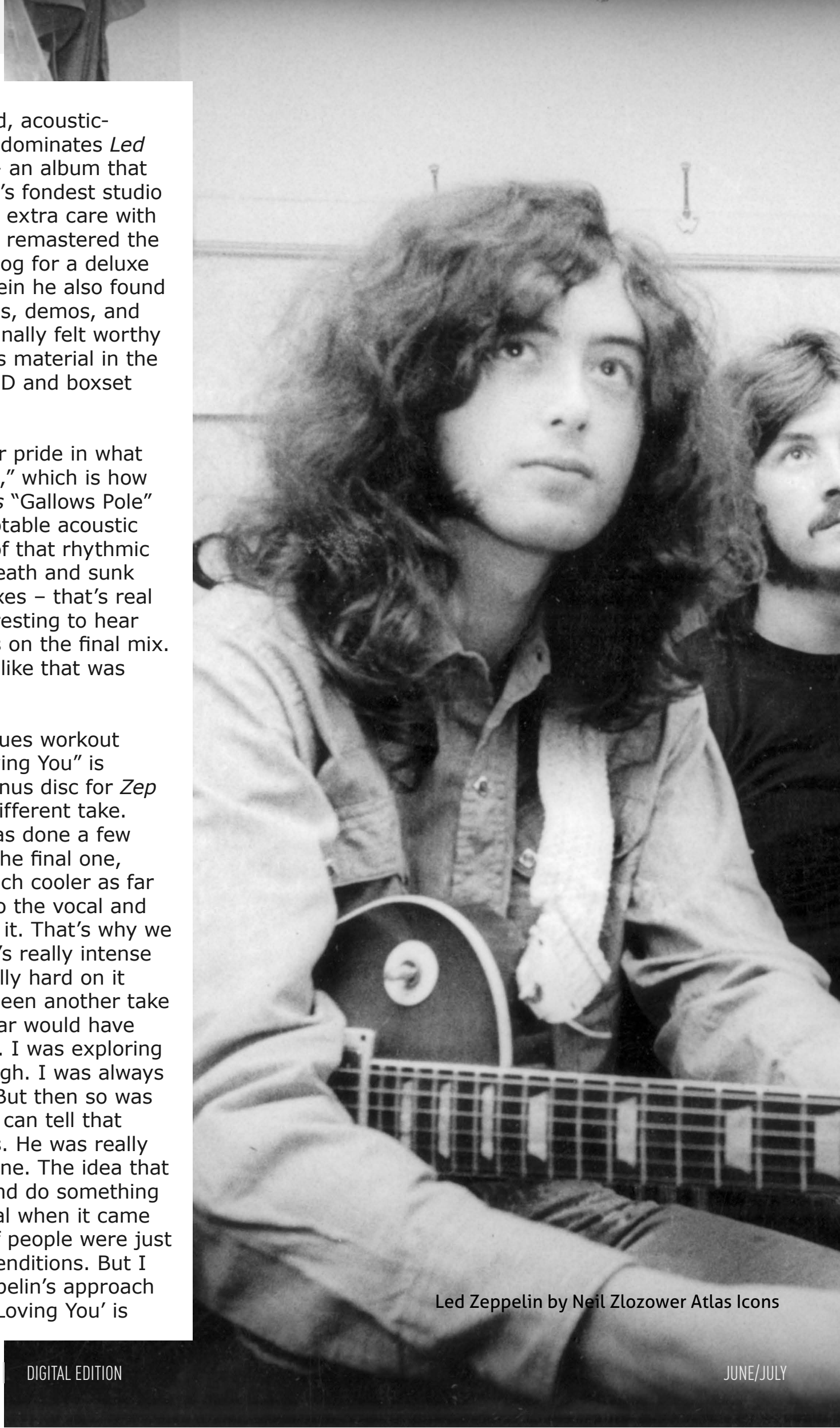
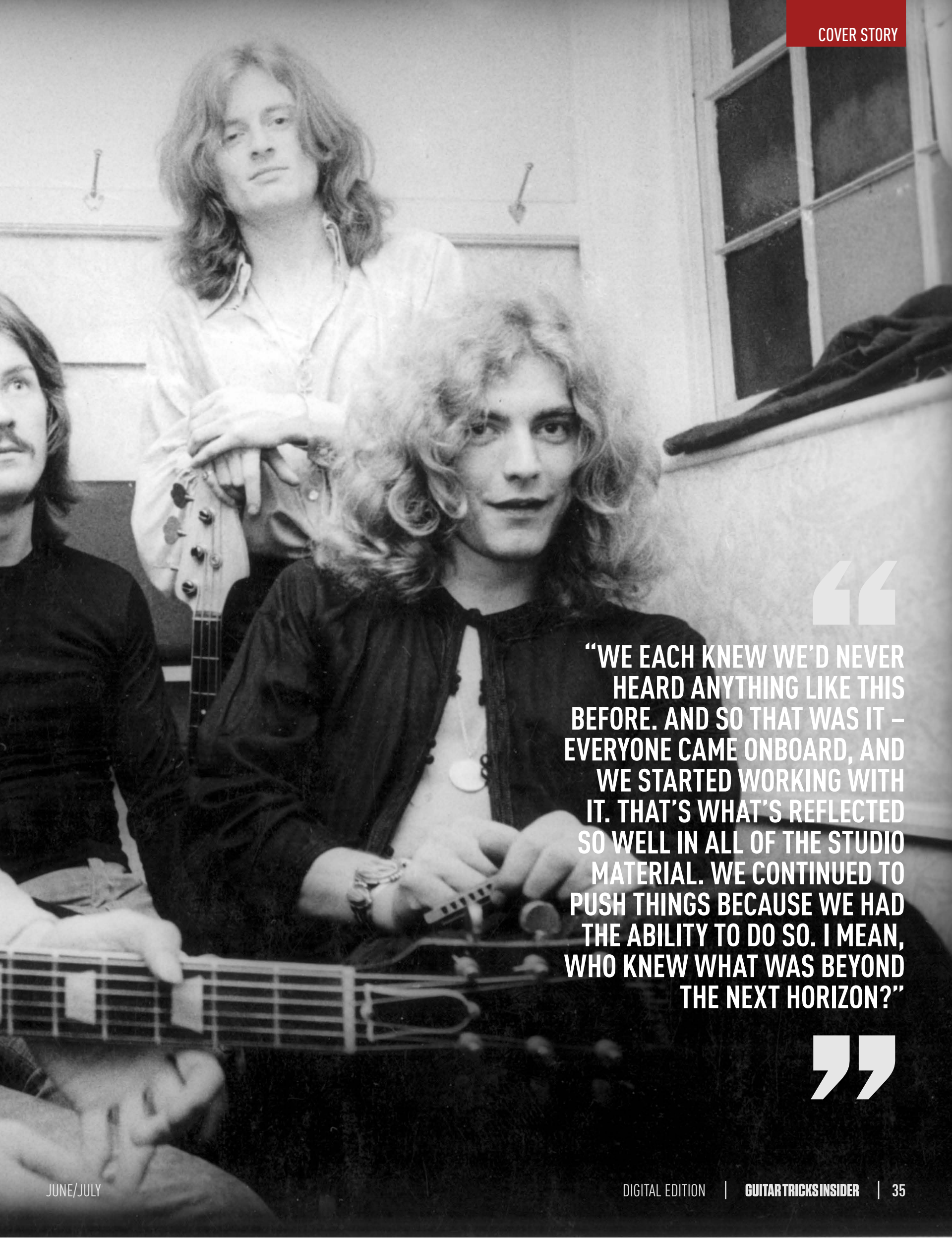
and to forge the bold, acoustic-driven material that dominates *Led Zeppelin III* (1970) – an album that remains one of Page's fondest studio creations. Page took extra care with *III* when he recently remastered the entire Zeppelin catalog for a deluxe reissue series, wherein he also found a number of outtakes, demos, and alternate mixes he finally felt worthy of including as bonus material in the companion double-CD and boxset releases.

Page takes particular pride in what he did on "Hangman," which is how he refers to *Zep III's* "Gallows Pole" – one of his most notable acoustic tour de forces: "All of that rhythmic guitar that's underneath and sunk down in the final mixes – that's real interesting. It's interesting to hear those cross-rhythms on the final mix. Hearing it come out like that was cool."

The live extended blues workout "Since I've Been Loving You" is presented on the bonus disc for *Zep III* in a completely different take. Page explains, "It was done a few days before we did the final one, where we take it much cooler as far as the approach is to the vocal and the guitar, and all of it. That's why we recut it – because it's really intense and the guitar is really hard on it there. If there had been another take of that one, the guitar would have been different again. I was exploring the whole way through. I was always trying to stretch it. But then so was everybody else. You can tell that from Robert's vocals. He was really on top of it on this one. The idea that night was to go in and do something that was quite radical when it came to the blues. A lot of people were just doing the blues as renditions. But I think that while Zeppelin's approach on 'Since I've Been Loving You' is



Led Zeppelin by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons



“WE EACH KNEW WE’D NEVER HEARD ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE. AND SO THAT WAS IT – EVERYONE CAME ONBOARD, AND WE STARTED WORKING WITH IT. THAT’S WHAT’S REFLECTED SO WELL IN ALL OF THE STUDIO MATERIAL. WE CONTINUED TO PUSH THINGS BECAUSE WE HAD THE ABILITY TO DO SO. I MEAN, WHO KNEW WHAT WAS BEYOND THE NEXT HORIZON?”

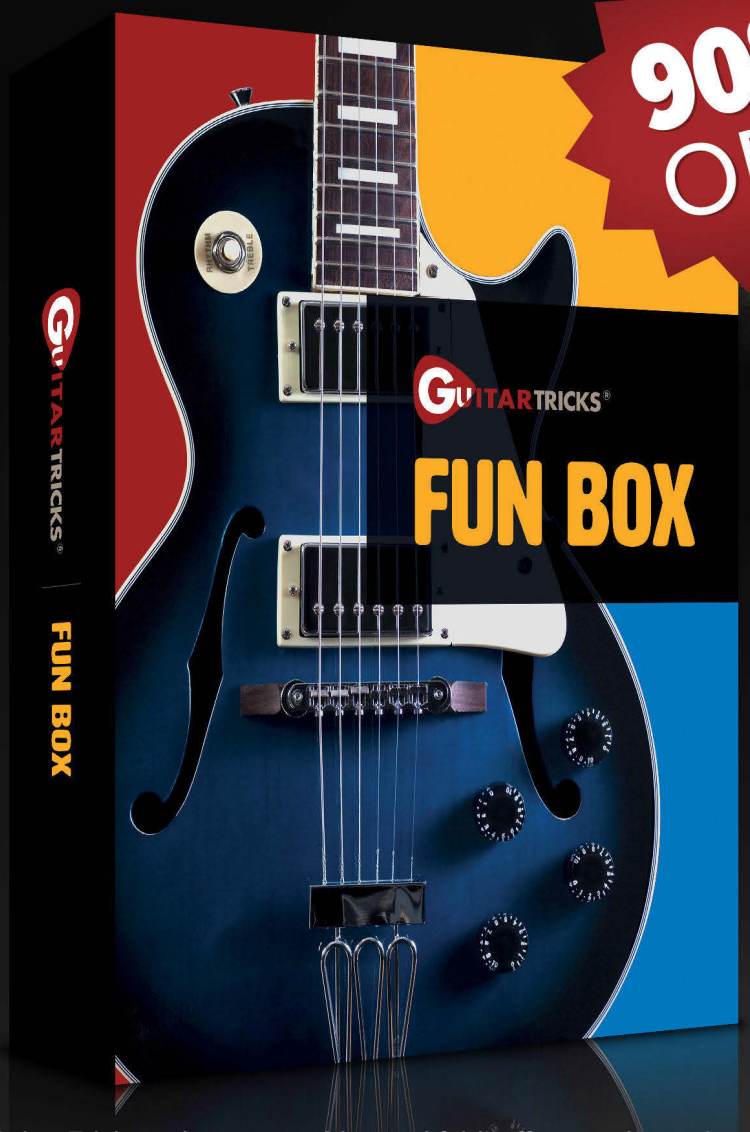
based on the blues, it goes into a whole new extension."

One of Zep's most revealing outtakes is their approach to the blues standard "Key to the Highway," which is a clear precursor to *Zep III's* "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper." Page observes, "It has a similar vocal sound as you could tell Robert is singing through the amp there. This was something I found on the same reel. I was looking for something else to use, and lo and behold, that pops out – 'Oh, I remember doing that.' It just sort of shaped up in that kind of way and it was the only take. There were no comps on that track."

Page was unafraid to add countrified blues into the overall Zeppelin mix: "It was country blues all night long," he says on their approach to "Hats Off to (Roy) Harper." (In case you were wondering, Roy Harper is a progressive-folk British artist and Page

Zeppelin Acoustic Hawaii by Robert Knight

"I Can't Quit You Baby" - Led Zeppelin Live



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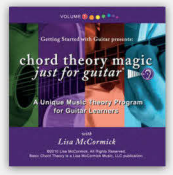

associate who also happened to be the guest lead vocalist on Pink Floyd's "Have a Cigar.") "When it started up, I remembered exactly what the circumstances were." Page continues, "All the subtleties and how intricate it is – I was very keen to do something along the country blues aspect of things. It started off that night with experiments like double-tracking the harmonica through my amp – that thing with the vibrato where it's really eerie. And then I just got the guitar and said, 'Well, we'll do a blues.' I started the intro, and we just locked into what you hear."

Robert Plant used his own connection to blues to take "Harper" even further. "It really just goes to show how in sync Robert and I were, you know? It's got its moments. Again, it's that sort of approach to the blues that isn't the way other people would do it. I was really pleased doing things through the amplifier because it really worked. And Robert is singing so brilliantly around the vibrato effect, isn't he?"

Taking an honest approach with the final mix has always been one of Page's calling cards as a producer. "All of these mixes are of the time. There's no jiggery-pokery. It's all the real deal, man. What you hear on 'Whole Lotta Love' – that's the sum of one night's recording when we did it in London. That's the original vocal on it. As far as the drums go, well, there are extra things that go on in the middle with the percussion and everything. It's the same with 'Heartbreaker' [the blistering *Zep II* track], as well – that guitar in the middle of it is what was done on the recording straight off."

As Zep's longtime sonic caretaker, Page has the right sources on hand when it comes to the remastering: "I have a huge collection of quarter-inch tapes from all the sessions. It's because I was the producer of the band; so consequently, I have far more tapes than anybody else did. The original recordings were analog tape; and they were done for vinyl during the late '60s and the '70s. The CDs that were put out of that material came from copy tapes – and they weren't very good to be honest with you. That's why the original tapes were brought back out again – the master tapes

Led Zeppelin by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons

– and they were remastered. I knew it was going to be a huge, epic task. But I wanted to make sure it was all really superb and was going to hold up. That's how I was driven."

While there are many ways to experience the Zeppelin catalog these days, Page is adamant about his own preferences. "The best way to listen to Led Zeppelin is off the analog tapes. But unfortunately I can't invite you around to listen to them," he says with a chuckle. "The vinyl masters of all the studio albums you know quite clearly are going to be the best ones. Personally, I never let go of vinyl even when CDs came onto the scene. But what I would recommend to you is that you *don't* listen to Led Zeppelin on MP3s. That's for sure."

Page, the master of light and shade, understands that technology progresses. So to that end he mixed and mastered "really, really high-resolution files for whatever system comes next." And that's Jimmy Page's Led Zeppelin directive for you in a nutshell: Making sure the song remains the same for eager listeners and appreciative guitar players for generations to come. ■

Mike Mettler writes the weekly Audiophile column for the Digital Trends website and is also the music editor of Sound & Vision. He interviews artists and producer about their love of music and its creation on his own site, The SoundBard (www.soundbard.com)

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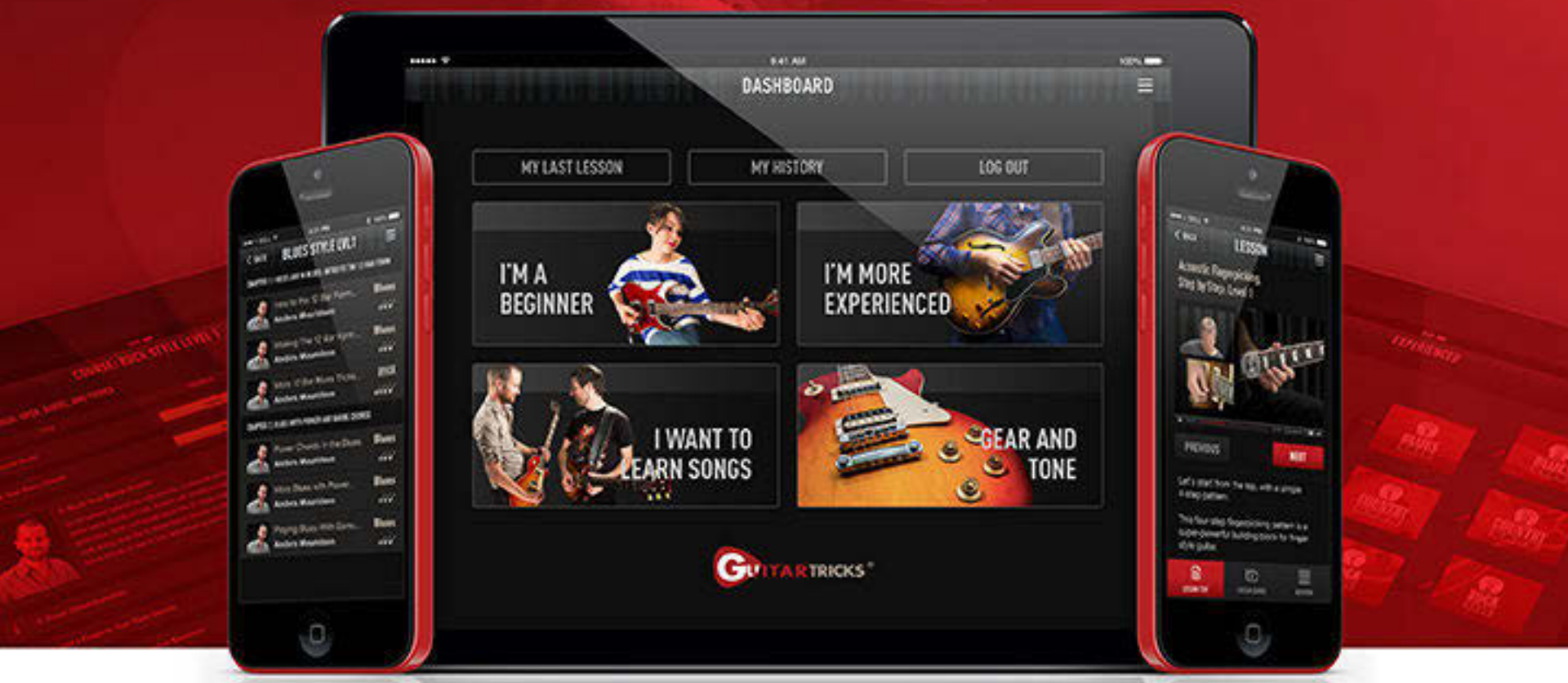

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If you turned on the radio in 1983 you heard Andy Summers' arpeggios in "Every Breath You Take," Eddie Van Halen's solo in "Billie Jean," and stinging blues licks in David Bowie's "Let's Dance." These all came from then unknown guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan. But SRV's explosive blues did not go unrecognized for long. Among guitar fans his 1983 debut recording, *Texas Flood*, was quickly compared to Clapton's Beano album (*Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton*). It was an apt comparison. *Texas Flood* unleashed a raw energy and naked emotion from its grooves. We had all heard a version of this blues vocabulary before. But it was never spoken like this. For the next seven years until his tragic death in 1990, Stevie Ray Vaughan would be the premiere ambassador for American blues guitar. In 1985 we spoke at length about his third album, *Soul to Soul*. Here is some of what he had to say.

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The spirit of your music on all three records is made. You're almost more of a jazz band than a rock band – meaning that you listen to each other to make the music rather than, "Let's just play the arrangement. You made a mistake – we have to go back."

That's something. I don't know how to play the same way twice. If I do I feel like I'm copying myself. And there's no fun there to me. A lot of musicians can find inspiration in doing that – doing something over and over until it's just exactly letter perfect. But the style we play is more right then.

I would guess you don't rehearse very much in the band.

We haven't rehearsed with this band since we've had a keyboard player. We started to one night. It was real late. We'd been partying. We planned on rehearsing and the equipment was late getting in from Dallas. It got there about three in the morning. We'd been listening to records and we were hanging out – had a few drinks. We started rehearsing and we just decided nah, never mind. We'd been playing gigs for months already. I guess the only rehearsing we do now pretty much is at sound check. Sometimes we run through something.

What about for the record? Did you rehearse for the record or did you just make a rough outline of the sketch of the arrangement?

That's about it, really. A lot of times we write 'em in the studio.

Now is this your best album? You almost have to say yes.

Yeah.

What's the key – what's the difference? What made it a little bit more special?

We've grown and we had to do a lot of soul searching while we were making this record.

SRV by Rick Gould

The best way to do it from now on, that I could find, would be to decide on a lot of the material... And like, be prepared for the record. Go out and play it. Then go back and do it.

SRV on recording albums

Can I ask why?

Well there's lots of different reasons. The first record of course we had 28 years to get together. The second one we had been on the road and cut it in the middle of being on the road. This one we had tried to come off the road and work on it – do pre-production and all this – without playing gigs. We realized that what was missing at first was not playing in front of people, because we had been away from not playing in front of crowds for seven weeks or so. So we went out and played about 10 gigs and came back and cut it like that.

That was a key ingredient. You actually have to be on the edge.

We missed that interaction with the people – if we don't read it. The best way to do it from now on, that I could find, would be to decide on a lot of the material. We always cut more than we used by a long shot. And like, be prepared for the record. Go out and...

And play the record live.

Play it. Then go back and do it.

Always the best. The crowd is going to tell you something about the song whether it works or not.

Sure.

Do you have a highlight in performance? Do you have a particular spot every night where you know you look forward to?

As soon as we walk on.

What about musically? Is there a song these days that sits in your pocket the best?

Well it's funny. Actually this is what it is. There's a song we're doing called "Life Without You" and it's incredible what happens. Everybody recognizes the song and none of them have heard it yet. We start playing it and people go crazy on the first chord.

It's on side two. I'm sure I haven't heard it.

It's the last song. As soon as we start this song everybody goes crazy like they've heard it – like they recognize it. Unless they've seen a gig in the last month or two nobody's heard it. I think that one is going to work. ■

SRV by David Plastik

"Life Without You" Stevie Ray Vaughan & Double Trouble at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival 1988

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ROGER MCGUINN: TAKING FLIGHT

BY BRUCE POLLOCK

"MUSICALLY, I THINK I'VE KIND OF STAYED WHERE I AM. I'VE ALWAYS LIKED THE HARPSICHORD AND BACH AND THINGS LIKE THAT. AND THE 12-STRING GUITAR IS KIND OF LIKE THE HARPSICHORD SOUND A LITTLE BIT."

Roger McGuinn by Paul Natkin
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As Roger McGuinn tells it, his march toward rock and roll immortality as The Byrds' guitarist started the day he heard voices. Before that he was content with toiling in the background behind folk groups like the Limeliters, Chad Mitchell Trio, and Bobby Darin. "My job with Darin was to listen to records and come up with stuff like the Beatles were doing. So I got a pickup for my acoustic 12-string and started messing around with that. His audiences thought I was out of my mind and weren't too appreciative. But I was doing folk rock when there was no such thing as folk rock."

In the meantime, with his guitar on his shoulder, he moonlighted at the same Greenwich Village basket houses as future '60s icons Bob Dylan, John Phillips, John Sebastian, and Peter Tork. Then the voices became too loud to ignore. He recalls, "When I saw the Beatles I knew I wanted to get a band together. I remember walking down the street just before I left New York and there were these club owners who said,

Roger McGuinn by Paul Natkin Photo Reserve

"Mr. Tambourine Man" by Roger McGuinn, Chris Hillman, David Crosby, and Bob Dylan

'What we need is four of him.' That's when I knew I had something that would work."

In 1964, after a solo gig at the Troubadour in L.A., McGuinn was approached by another folkie, Gene Clark, and the incipient Byrds had their wings. When David Crosby later joined The Byrds gained a beak. Mike Clarke perched himself on the drums and Chris Hillman pecked at the bass. But at that early point they called themselves the Beefeaters. Their manager Jim Dickson had free access to a recording studio at night, and so the five holed up there through most of 1964 with a four track tape machine. Finally, their demo was good enough to land a contract at Columbia Records; but no one at the label knew quite what to make of them.

"They just wanted to get some kind of young thing going on," said McGuinn. "Terry Melcher was the only young producer Columbia had on staff, so they just sort of stuck us with him." In 1964 and 1965, groups still had to prove themselves with singles before any parent company would be persuaded to shell out large sums necessary to produce an entire album. If the single bombed, there would be no album. That was the problem for The Byrds back in 1965. Columbia wouldn't release their single – it just sat in the can for five months.

That moldering single was a cover of Bob Dylan's "Mr. Tambourine Man" – Jim Dickson's idea. McGuinn recalls, "He had the vision to hear 'Mr. Tambourine Man.' It didn't sound like a hit to me."

While waiting for Columbia Records to spring into action, McGuinn was approached by Dino Valenti of Quicksilver Messenger Service to start a band. He considered it until he heard voices again – this time it was *his* voice on "Mr. Tambourine Man" playing all over the radio.

The name Beefeaters changed to The Byrds and they quickly became America's rock 'n' roll answer to the Beatles. At Ciro's, a dilapidated nightclub on the Strip, they were a fixture bent on ripping down the frothy scenery of the California myth, which was propagated by the Beach Boys, and Jan & Dean – a myth

"Mr. Tambourine Man," was strictly (producer) Jim Dickson's idea. "It didn't sound like a hit to me."

full of sand and sun, cars and girls, and most especially, the holy surfboard. McGuinn – with his imposing 12-string guitar, his Ben Franklin glasses, and intellectual smirk – had surfed but once in his life.

He confesses, "I didn't have much rock and roll savvy at that point. I had my folk chops together; but my sense of rhythm wasn't too highly developed because in folk music the emphasis on keeping a solid beat isn't that strong. That was the thing that frightened us the most. When we played Ciro's, people were actually dancing in front of us and if you messed up the beat they'd fall down. Also, single string picking was something I didn't do much of with a flat pick in the folk field. I did fingerpicking and Travis picking and that kind of thing. So I had to learn to how pick out individual notes. I started practicing scales to get my technique together. I practiced hours and hours every day. With my first Rickenbacker I used to just sit there on my bed and play all morning every day. Unfortunately, after we had a couple of hits, I got lazy and there were times when I didn't pick up a guitar for a few days or a week and I kind of lost my chops."

But those couple of hits contained exquisite Beatlesesque harmonies on "It Won't Be Wrong," "Here Without You," "You Won't Have to Cry," and "Set You Free This Time," and monsters like "Turn! Turn! Turn!," "So You Want to Be a Rock and Roll Star," and the majestic "Eight Miles High," which McGuinn was especially proud of.

"We were on the Dick Clark caravan of stars," he recalled. "Cassette players had just come out and I had bought one in Europe. On tour we ran into a guy who had John Coltrane's *India* and we taped it and had it with us, and played it over and over again to the point of saturation. We wrote 'Eight Miles High' during that period and when we got into the studio, lines from it were just like in *India*. It's the same theme you hear only I sped it up a little bit and played it on the 12-string. It was definitely a tribute to Coltrane, if you will. I wanted to go in that direction but I met with some resistance from the other guys in the band, who wanted to go into country music."

"Eight Miles High," however, represented for The Byrds the beginning of the end. "It was climbing up the charts and then the *Gavin Report* came out and panned it," McGuinn said. "They said it was a drug song, and all these stations stopped playing it, and I don't think they wanted to touch us after that."

David Crosby didn't help matters when he ranted during the band's performance at the Monterey Pop Festival: "He said stuff like, '*The Warren Report* is a lie,' and 'Paul McCartney said everybody should take acid.' The crowd loved him. But that's the reason we didn't get in the movie."

A few weeks later The Byrds were auditioning new members for Crosby's vacated slot. While the Monterey incident was only partially the reason for Crosby's dismissal, his departure foreshadowed other problems that would plague The Byrds once they reached their destined treetop. Battles over power and control invade the most idealistic group and The Byrds didn't escape this: "I was the leader in name, at least. I did the lead vocals and lead guitar, plus got a lot of recognition. Crosby wanted to be the top man and kept pushing for that, and there was

The Byrds by Neil Zlozower
Atlas Icons

just this ego battle going on all the time. I mean there were fist fights. So Chris Hillman and I got rid of Crosby because he was so outrageous. And then Hillman started wanting to be the top guy. You can't win. The only way to do it is not to have a group, I guess."

Before the breakup in 1970, Terry Melcher produced The Byrds' last two chart singles, "Jesus Is Just Alright" and "Ballad of Easy Rider." The "Easy Rider" theme came to them courtesy of Peter Fonda and, little known fact, Bob Dylan: "Back when I was working with Bobby Darin, Peter Fonda was working with Sandra Dee and he came to see us in Vegas. Then David Crosby got to be friends with Peter and he came to the sessions when we were playing. He had a lot of our records, and when he went to do

the *Easy Rider* soundtrack, in order to save money he took his record collection and put it out on the soundtrack, which at that point was unprecedented. But he also wanted a song that was custom made for the movie so he asked me if I'd write him a song. Actually, he took the movie to New York and he showed it to Dylan. Dylan scribbled down a couple of lines on a napkin and gave it to Peter and said, 'Here. Give this to McGuinn.' It was the entire chorus. I took it and wrote the rest of it and came up with a tune. I tried to give Dylan credit on it. In fact, the first release has 'by Bob Dylan and Jim McGuinn.' And he called me up and said, 'what is this? I don't want any credit on this song.' I said, 'well, you wrote part of it.' He said, 'I don't want to be associated with it. I don't need the money. I don't need the credit. Take it off.' So I took it off."

In recent years he's found a more compatible collaborator – his wife Camilla. McGuinn tells me, "I usually write on a word processor. I've got a four track home studio. I usually get the melody first and work it out on the guitar. And then I play it until it suggests something to me – like a line or an idea – and I build it from there. I often work with my wife. Sometimes I go through two or three different sets of lyrics until I lock in on the one I like. Musically, I think I've kind of stayed where I am. I've always liked the harpsichord and Bach and things like that. And the 12-string guitar is kind of like the harpsichord sound a little bit."

That Rickenbacker was still with him when I met him in 1988. "Right now I'm touring with a replica of the 1965 Rickenbacker 370, which is the one with the three pickups I used to play with a few things added. One thing is a circuit board that's underneath the pickguard. It's a compressor that makes the guitar sound just like The Byrds records. What we used to do in the studio with boxes and outboard equipment now is built into the guitar so any kid can pick it up and sound like that record if they want to. I'm practicing on the Rickenbacker, too. You have to really work on it a lot to get that technique down because the neck is so narrow and the placement of the strings is so tight on the right hand that if you're used to an acoustic 12, you're going to miss it on the Rickenbacker. I play more now than I have in years. When I started being a solo artist I really had to get my chops together. Because I was working without a drummer I had to really get my time locked in and my single string picking down."

At the end McGuinn had become what he was in the beginning. In a moment of humble self-reflection he says, "I never thought of myself as a guitar hero. I play guitar and sing." ■

Bruce Pollock is the author of 12 books on music, including Working Musicians and The Rock Song Index. Visit my website: **www.brucepollockthewriter.com**

8 TIPS FOR BUYING THE PERFECT ACOUSTIC GUITAR

by Pete Prown

There are literally hundreds of acoustic guitar models on the market. Which one is right for you? These eight killer tips will help you decide on the boom box that will make you sound better. We'll start with basic concepts, like cost and body types, and work our way towards specialized areas, like neck joints and electronics.

1 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A $200 AND $1,000 ACOUSTIC

The first tip is obvious but must be asked – *how much do you want to spend*? You can get a perfectly playable acoustic guitar for just a few hundred bucks; but expect a substantially less lively tone. Every dollar you spend gets you "something" – a faster neck, an increasingly resonant tone, more desirable looks, or fancier electronics.

A $200 acoustic should be a serviceable guitar for a beginner or a backup for a more seasoned player. There might be some sloppy construction (such as crude binding work or messy internal-brace gluing), but it should still be sturdy and handle a fair amount of wear 'n' tear. There are some perfectly fine low-end acoustics out there.

A $700 should have better playability, looks, and construction. The $1,000+ axe should have premium materials such as higher-grade tonewoods, and hardware like tuners, a faster neck with lower action, more attention to build quality, and a bigger or more nuanced tone. You might also overpay for the privilege of that famous logo on the headstock depending on the brand.

The critical thing is to avoid big name guitars that *don't* sound good or play well. *Always* rely on your ears and fingers to find the right guitar rather than your eyes for any superficial "cool factor." Trust me. It ain't worth having that fancy logo if the instrument doesn't live up to your expectations.

Getting a flatline with your acoustic?

The SansAmp Para Driver DI gives your instrument a natural warmth and presence, as if you were miking it through a tube pre-amp. The 100% analog SansAmp circuitry eliminates the harsh, unnatural harmonics of piezo pickups, while the Drive control offers some tasteful edge --just a little or over-the-top.

Get detailed tone shaping possibilities for any signal source-- acoustic, electric, and bass guitars, upright bass, fiddle, even vocals and drums. You can either go direct to a mixing console or use it with an instrument amplifier.

Features include active tone controls with 12dB of cut or boost, sweepable semi-parametric EQ, 1/4-inch 4.7 megOhm instrument level input, 1/4-inch and XLR outputs with selectable levels, and parallel, uneffected output to run a dry signal to a separate channel.

Jump start your tone back to life with the SansAmp Para Driver DI.

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Pete Prown is the leader of Guitar Garden, which has several CDs to its credit, as well as a veteran guitar journalist. He also writes fiction, available at **peteprown.com**

2 THE SHAPES OF THINGS

Acoustics come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes: dreadnought, concert, orchestra, parlor, jumbo, and more. This is handy because guitarists come in all shapes and sizes! A player with big hands might prefer a wide nut width and beefy body, while a petite picker needs a more diminutive shape and shorter scale (the distance from nut to bridge).

A standard acoustic is the thick-waisted dreadnought, which projects a big, bold tone, and is often preferred by musicians who play in all-acoustic situations like folk or bluegrass. Concert- and orchestra-style bodies have thinner waists and bigger hips for a more subtle tone, while parlors are small-bodied and project less bass (i.e., for playing in small rooms). Big-body "jumbos" should deliver a big bang of bass.

These are basic guidelines and everyone ultimately has different tastes. In fact, people even *hear* different things in any given instrument. So the best thing to do is to plop down at a local shop and try many different types until you get a sense of what body shape gives you the tone and fit that you're happy with.

3 CUTAWAY OR NON-CUTAWAY?

On the surface the definition of a cutaway is a no-brainer: the builder has *cut away* part of the body for increased upper-fret access and shredability. But many traditional players feel that this, right or wrong, diminishes tone and bass frequencies. While there are arguments for both sides, you have to get a feel for what you prefer. Note: If you're playing through an amp or PA system, whether or not there's a cutaway is less of an issue.

That said the best acoustic guitars generally don't have cutaways – be it a vintage Martin D-18, Gibson Hummingbird, or other fine luthier-made masterpieces. *Just sayin'*.

4 BOLT-ON VS. BUILT-IN NECKS

Acoustic guitars traditionally feature a built-in "dovetail" neck glued into the body joint. About 40 years ago, Taylor upended the acoustic world with bolt-on necks, as you might find on certain solid-bodies. Today it's merely a choice-point. Both styles yield fine results. Often, old-school players want the glued-in build while modernists prefer the speed of bolt-ons. Either way it's really more about the player's experience. If you pick up the acoustic, like its tone and playability, then the bolt-on *vs*. built-in argument is null and void.

Advice: there are bigger things in the world to worry about than the method of neck-joint construction. Tone and playability are far more important.

5

DO TONEWOODS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Yes. Most acoustics come with a softwood spruce or cedar top (or soundboard), and some kind of hardwood neck, back, and sides such as mahogany, nato, rosewood, and many other choices. These days you may find acoustics with tropical hardwood tops such as mahogany (like the Martin D-15) or even Hawaiian koa, which looks gorgeous but will be on the bright side. Bodies with maple backs and sides are also brighter while mahogany is the standard for warmth.

Ever been dazzled by a $300 acoustic with a gorgeous flame-maple top? That's because they're usually decal adhesives or thin veneers glued to a laminated top. You generally wouldn't want a hardwood maple top anyway – it's too hard to vibrate and project sound. That groovy flame decal doesn't mean the guitar isn't functional; but you should know what you're paying for.

6

SOLID TOP OR LAMINATE?

An acoustic guitar is essentially a wooden box that sounds good. It has hardwood back and sides, and usually a softwood top to vibrate and push air out of the sound hole. A laminated top doesn't resonate as much as solid, so the tone won't be as warm or natural. However, if you buy an acoustic-electric and you're only ever going to plug into an amp or PA for rehearsals or live gigs, the more affordable laminate should cover the basics.

Bottom line: If you want a superior acoustic tone or plan to record with mics, a solid top is by far the superior choice.

7 CRANK IT UP

For decades, guitarists have struggled with the pros of amplifying acoustics with cons like feedback and tinny tones. In the old gigging days guitarists often used a removable magnetic pickup or a microphone, the latter of which often yielded excellent results, though at the cost of being able to move around onstage.

About 40 years ago, piezo pickups came into fashion. They provided an acoustic-like tone but were thin, brittle, and sounded buzzy. For better or worse the piezo, paired with an internal battery-powered preamp, became the wave of the future and norm for acoustic amplification.

Over time both preamp EQ technology and acoustic amps have improved; but you can still buy removable magnetic pickups, which can sound good and require no battery, or even internal or clip-on condenser mics for very clear tones.

For the best acoustic-electric results, buy a guitar with the best pickup and/or preamp you can afford, or use an old-fashioned mic onstage. There's no one perfect solution other than to say that cheap piezo-pickup systems really do stink. Avoid them at all costs.

8

BOTTOM LINE

What are you waiting for? Go to the local axe shack and start fingerpickin' or strumming some acoustics. You'll find the perfect boom box in no time with these tips. ■

Jimmy Page Artist Study

Without a doubt, Jimmy Page is one of the most influential and well-known guitarists of all time. He is commonly referred to as the "master of riffs" due to his incredible solos and signature techniques. Page's use of blues solo licks and pentatonic riffs has helped shape his instantly recognizable sound. In this tutorial, Mike Olekshi takes you through these and more – including Page's acoustic style! After this tutorial you will be able to blend blues-style soloing and rock and roll to create a sound that resembles the master of riffs himself!

CLICK HERE FOR FULL FREE LESSON

Campfire Chords With Character

Campfire chords are great for singing along to and are simple to play. In this video lesson series, Dale Turner will show you how to spice up those chords to make them exciting and personalized to your style. Use the fingerstyle techniques in this lesson to sound like Elliot Smith and Nuno Bettencourt, or the picking techniques to sound like Dave Matthews and Neil Young. Mix and match to get the sound you desire.

CLICK HERE FOR FULL FREE LESSON

ELECTRO-HARMONIX "B9" EFFECT PEDAL

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE **$221**

Electro-Harmonix established a reputation in the '70s for making state-of-the-art effects pedals for guitarists and bassists. Classics like the Electric Mistress (flanger), Memory Man (analog echo/delay), Big Muff (fuzz box), and Micro Synthesizer (first pedal-form guitar synth) are must haves in the vintage market circles. Founder Mike Matthews and his EHX family will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in a couple years and they show no signs of slowing down as they continue the tradition of developing world-class effects and tools for guitarists.

Their award-winning "B9" stomp box offers a fresh perspective and illustrates how far guitar synthesis has evolved in transforming your ax into a convincing old-school organ – by converting the signal from the pickups with incredible accuracy (no MIDI required). The pedal emulates nine of the most popular vintage organ/keyboard sounds and serves them up in one small box for guitarists. Imagine Bach-style cathedral tones, Jimmy Smith's groovy Hammond B-3 jazz explorations, psychedelic '60s keyboard textures a la the Doors, rock/classical-infused thunder of Deep Purple's Jon Lord, and bluesy organ reminiscent of Booker T. and the MGs' "Green Onions" all coming from the same pedal. All for a little over $200 bucks!

I was surprised at how well the pedal tracked chords and kept up with fast musical passages. It didn't miss a beat and the notes were clear and defined. One of the coolest benefits of the B9 is that it provides additional sonic options and encourages a keyboardist mindset for new chord voicings, bass lines, and phrases not found in everyday guitar vocabulary. Between the presets and easy-to-use layout, pulling up a great organ sound is as simple as turning a knob, and there's no editing menus or programming. The sounds are immediately satisfying and easy to work with right out of the box. Just plug in and play! Note: the B9 tracks best with a clean and even performance; so if your playing is not consistent, put a compressor in front of the pedal to help smooth out irregularities and deliver a better sound. Otherwise EHX recommends placing the B9 first in the effect chain.

9V
DRY
VOL
ORGAN
MOD
CLICK
B9
organ
machine
1 FAT & FULL
2 JAZZ
3 GOSPEL
4 CLASSIC ROCK
5 BOTTOM END
6 OCTAVES
7 CATHEDRAL
8 CONTINENTAL
9 BELL ORGAN
ORGAN OUTPUT
DRY
INPUT
electro-harmonix
NEW YORK CITY, USA

ELECTRO-HARMONIX "B9" EFFECT PEDAL

FEATURES

The white tone knob lets you roll through nine robust and finely tuned preset organ sounds: Fat & Full, Jazz, Gospel, Classic Rock, Bottom End, Octaves, Cathedral, Continental, and Bell Organ. The four black knobs at the top of the pedal control volume balance between Dry and Organ signal, Mod (vibrato, chorus, and tremolo contingent on preset chosen), and Click (percussive click attack level). The Organ output jack sends the mix of the Dry and Organ controls to an amp, while the Dry output jack delivers the unaffected Input jack signal to a separate amp. The casing is solid metal, durable, and designed to take a beating (a definite upgrade from the original Big Muff I owned back in the '70s), and powered by a 9-volt DC adaptor (included).

VERDICT

There's no doubt that this is a hip pedal. All the sounds are so hearty and rich you won't want to stop playing. I guarantee that a few minutes with the B9 will turn into hours once you plug in. It's a whole new world of musical imagery for guitarists. The B9 will make you think twice about hiring a keyboard player for your Deep Purple or Steppenwolf tribute band! ■

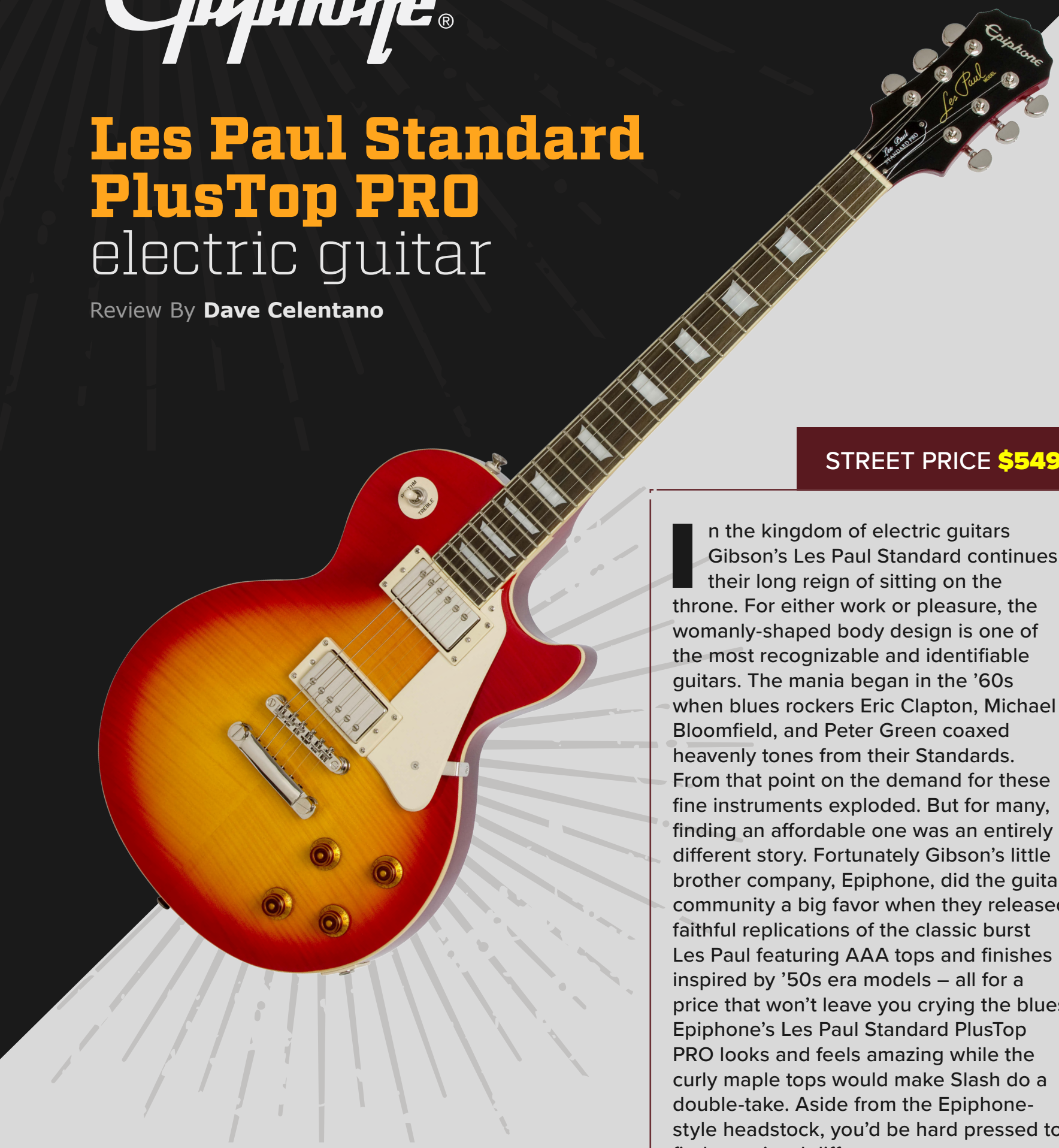
Win this pedal! Enter your email for a chance to get your own Electro-Harmonix "B9" pedal.

Plus, get every issue of Guitar Tricks Insider in your inbox.

Epiphone®

Les Paul Standard PlusTop PRO electric guitar

Review By **Dave Celentano**



STREET PRICE **$549**

In the kingdom of electric guitars Gibson's Les Paul Standard continues their long reign of sitting on the throne. For either work or pleasure, the womanly-shaped body design is one of the most recognizable and identifiable guitars. The mania began in the '60s when blues rockers Eric Clapton, Michael Bloomfield, and Peter Green coaxed heavenly tones from their Standards. From that point on the demand for these fine instruments exploded. But for many, finding an affordable one was an entirely different story. Fortunately Gibson's little brother company, Epiphone, did the guitar community a big favor when they released faithful replications of the classic burst Les Paul featuring AAA tops and finishes inspired by '50s era models – all for a price that won't leave you crying the blues. Epiphone's Les Paul Standard PlusTop PRO looks and feels amazing while the curly maple tops would make Slash do a double-take. Aside from the Epiphone-style headstock, you'd be hard pressed to find any visual differences.

FEATURES

The Les Paul Standard PlusTop PRO has similar features as a Gibson Les Paul including a 24.75” scale neck, pair of humbucker pickups with dedicated volume and tone for each, three-way toggle switch, and cream-colored binding around the body and neck. Bonus: the dual-purpose volume knobs are push/pull and serve as coil splits for each pickup, which provide immediate access to single coil tones previously unavailable on a Les Paul. This feature alone just upped the ante in my book for versatility! With the addition of single-coil pickup splits this guitar can easily handle all blues, rock, and metal situations. Grover 14:1 ratio tuners and a locking Tune-o-matic bridge system ensure the guitar will stay in tune and withstand grueling demands of studio and gigging musicians. The composite mahogany body and neck make the guitar slightly lighter, which is a welcoming feature considering one of the most common complaints from Les Paul players is the weight. I dug the feel of the set neck, which had the profile of an early ’60s-style Gibson Les Paul with well-dressed, medium size frets. Several eye-catching finishes are offered and each enhances the beauty of the AAA flame maple top underneath. Modern rockers and head bangers might favor the Trans Blue and Wine Red, while blues and rock purists will appreciate the Honey Burst, Vintage Sunburst, and Heritage Cherry Sunburst.

Vintage-sounding ProBucker 2 and 3 pickups are mounted at the neck and bridge positions respectively and both use Alnico II magnets, which are commonplace in old-school PAF humbuckers. The pickups responded well with a clean tone; and the single coil option closely replicated the funky tone of P-90s. The neck pickup sounds especially good for jazzy chords and changes, but in my opinion the pickups sounded best when teamed with varying levels of distortion. Try dashing a bit of overdrive for bluesy chording and soloing, or beef it up with serious gain for Metallica-style riffing. Any way you want it this guitar can deliver. ■

VERDICT

The Les Paul Standard PlusTop PRO is a great choice for beginner to intermediate players, or pros in search of a guitar that looks and sounds awesome yet can leave it unattended on the bandstand during set breaks. You won’t find a better and more versatile guitar for the money. My only regret is that they didn’t come out with this Les Paul Standard replica when I was a kid. Kudos to Epiphone for keeping the flame burning (pun intended)!

ORANGE

DUAL DARK 50 AMP

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE $2299

Orange's Dual Dark 50 50-watt amp head (also available in 100 watts) will literally blow your socks off! It's their highest gain amp to date and an evolution of their acclaimed 15-watt high gain Dark Terror studio/practice amp. Offering more than a repurposing, Dual Dark adds tons of power and boasts a second channel equipped with three-band EQ, power attenuator (accessible from both channels), and four gain stages assuring overdrive bliss no matter what channel is used. This amp is not for the faintheartedness, but rather for players who want a no-frills control panel and lots of meaty distortion while maintaining a tight, articulate tone. Rather than throwing in everything but the kitchen sink, Orange took the approach of developing a simple, versatile, and killer-sounding amp that would start with the player's tone, letting the user add effects through the effects loop.

FEATURES

Built like a tank, the Dual Dark 50 is a 46-pound beast capable of producing tones equally as heavy. It's outfitted with EL34 tubes and can run at half power (25 watts) while maintaining plenty of valve distortion at lower volume levels – great for those occasions when you don't want to punish your audience's eardrums! Channel A is a new design featuring a three-band EQ (treble, middle, and bass) that sounds bright and harmonically more complex, while Channel B is a bit darker and basic offering an ultra-cool, midrange sculpting Shape knob, which I totally dig. Although both channels are equally impressive and purposeful, B has more hi-gain modeled after the Dark Terror series. Each channel has a unique tonal flavor. The amp is more versatile than its metal inclinations, which is apparent when experimenting with the Volume and Gain balance for both, revealing a wide range of clean to heavily distorted tones.

One of the coolest features is the attenuator knob, which can push the amp to its limits while simultaneously reducing volume down to a whisper without compromising tone. The attenuator sounded best with a clean tone or lesser amounts of overdrive. Conversely, too much attenuator combined with super hi-gain resulted in a squashed tone that might sound impressive while practicing in your bedroom, but would get lost in the mix with a live band.

The back of the unit has three speaker outputs (two 8 and one 16 ohm), footswitch inputs for channel selection and attenuator (footswitches sold separately), and an effects loop to colorize your sound. The heavy-duty casing with the control panel inset protects the knobs and switches. Players familiar with Orange's line will recognize the unique, hieroglyphic style icons

positioned above each control knob providing a visual description of their audible functions. And the pair of chrome grip handles flanking the control panel will come in handy when moving or repositioning the head on top of speaker cabinet stacks. I can hear guitar roadies everywhere singing, "praise hallelujah!"

Curious to hear what this bad boy amp could do, I plugged in my Les Paul and Strat for comparison. The single coils, especially the neck position, were absolutely funky-licious when I dialed up a clean to slightly distorted sound. But to my ears, the humbuckers won hands down in all categories. Both channels are equally inspiring. This amp proves its versatility from ultra clean to classic British to the super saturated sustain of a Mesa. ■

VERDICT

If an amp worked out at the gym, the Dual Dark 50 would look like the Hulk. Orange makes no apologies for this badass amp with its attention to detail and high-quality, which might help soften the blow of the price tag. Clearly Dual Dark is targeted for hard rock and metal, but classic rock and blues players shouldn't dismiss this amp. Dual Dark 50 is a pro-line, concert-ready head that will give you the power and tone for live shows and recording.

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F-1512E

ACOUSTIC-ELECTRIC 12-STRING

Review By **Dave Celentano**

STREET PRICE **$1099**

Some of the earliest 12-string acoustic proponents were bluesmen Huddie "Leadbelly" Ledbetter and Blind Willie McTell, who used the instrument to deliver their unique brand of blues in the early 1900s. Since then the 12-string has gained appeal in multiple genres and has been featured predominantly in classic tunes including the Eagles' "Hotel California," Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here," and Led Zeppelin's "Over the Hills and Far Away." There's also a cool video floating around the Internet of Jimi Hendrix playing "Hear My Train a Comin'" on a 12-string. But these captivating instruments don't come without a price. Common issues associated with 12-strings are necks that are big and difficult to play, high action, and intonation problems higher on the fretboard. Guild addressed these problems and won the battle with their F-1512E model – a properly set up acoustic/electric 12-string featuring a comfortable vintage style "C" shaped neck for easy chording that sounds in tune all the way up the neck. The F-1512E is from Guild's "Westerly Collection," a new line catering to budget-conscious consumers and inspired by the commitment to quality and extraordinary craftsmanship of guitars from their early years at the Westerly factory in Rhode Island. Although the F-1512E is manufactured in China, Guild holds their Asian luthiers to the same high standards of producing detail-focused guitars with top line woods, accouterments, and exceptional craftsmanship. The guitar is also available without onboard electronics for a slightly lower price point as model F-1512. I was impressed with this jumbo body 12-string from the start. No bells and whistles – just solid and well-built with a beautifully rich and full-bodied tone. And it is loud! Make no bones about it.

FEATURES

From the well-manicured frets, pinstripe binding, and highly polished clear finish, to the traditional Guild headstock logo, insignia, and mother-of-pearl rosette, the guitar's appearance is clean yet detailed. Teaming a solid Sitka spruce top, Sitka spruce scalloped X bracing, and solid Indian rosewood back and sides yields an abounding body and presence in the bass, shimmering highs, and beefy mids that cut through the mix. These tonewoods combined with the jumbo body produce tons of volume even when you're not plugged in. The sizeable body boasts 16 5/8" at the widest bout, 4 1/2" max depth, and length of 21". This is a big guitar on anybody's lap! The neck is mahogany with Indian rosewood fretboard and bridge, mother-of-pearl dot inlay fret markers, and a 25 1/2" scale length. Intonation discrepancies are resolved with the compensated bone saddle, providing sweet-sounding chords all across the neck (12-string players will surely appreciate this feature). And the 1 7/8" wide bone nut allows comfortable room between string pairs for easy chording. Double truss rods provide stability to counter the extra tension of additional strings and are accessible through the sound-hole. Hardware includes fully enclosed, nickel-plated die-cast machine heads, and two chrome strap buttons – the bottom one doubling as a 1/4" output jack to an amp or P.A. The onboard Fishman Sonitone electronics and under saddle pickup produces a

naturally amplified tone mirroring the complex harmonics and overtones of the instrument and perfect for live shows. Onboard volume and tone controls are mounted discreetly just inside the sound hole and are easily accessible preserving the natural "acoustic" look. My only reservation is that the battery is tucked away inside the body and accessed through the sound-hole meaning several strings would need to be loosened in order to replace the battery – not a quick and easy fix if the battery dies during a gig. The guitar includes a Guild jumbo polyfoam case with convenient backpack-style shoulder straps for hands-free transportation and limited lifetime warranty for the original retail purchaser. ■

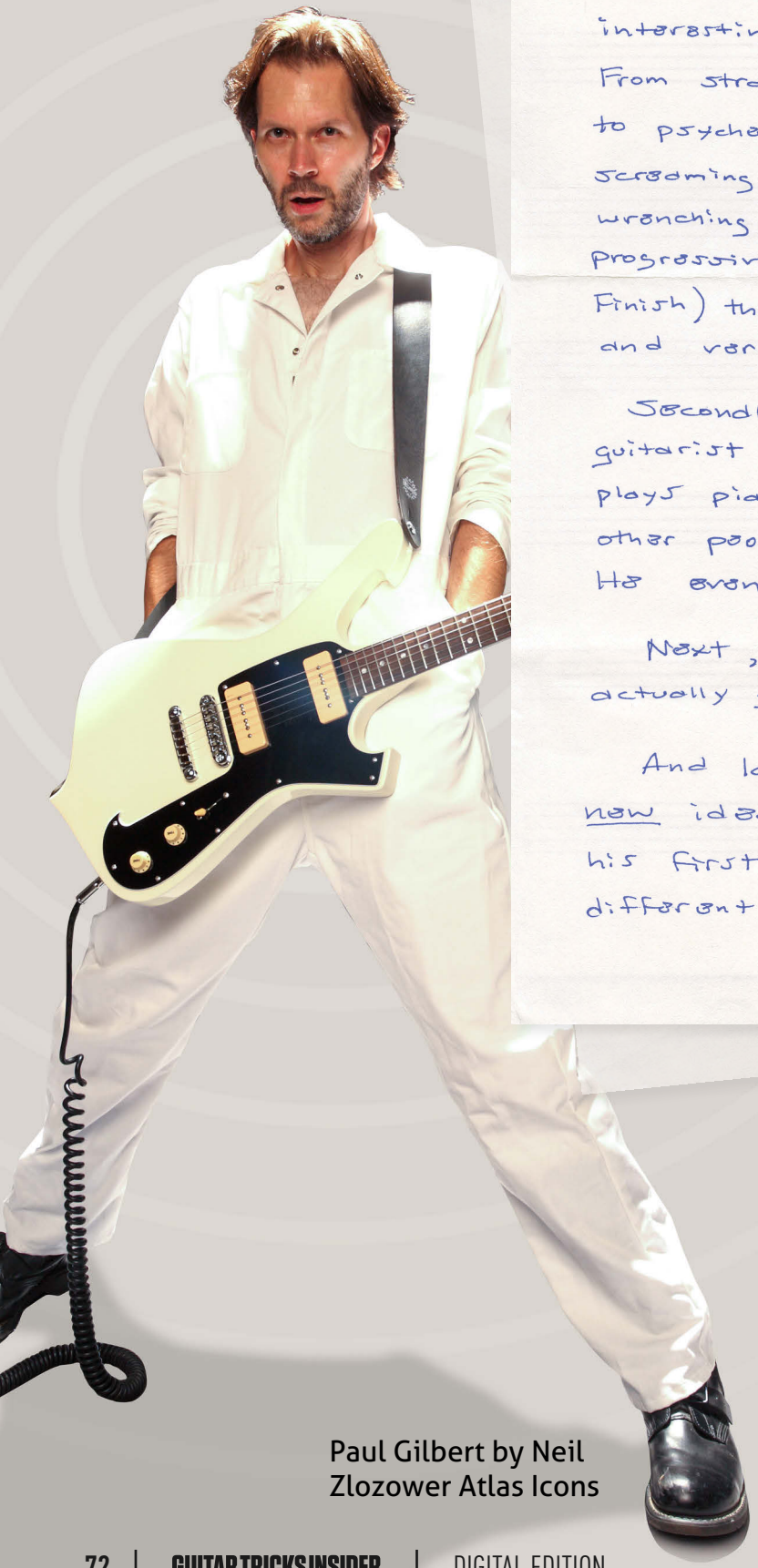
VERDICT

Quality parts, craftsmanship, tone, and affordability come into the equation when pulling out the wallet; and the F-1512E gets high marks in all categories. This visually humble guitar might not make you take a second look, but once it has the opportunity to be played I doubt you'll be putting it down anytime soon.

Dave Celentano teaches private guitar lessons in the Los Angeles area, authored a multitude of educational guitar books, dvds, and internet tutorials, and released several cds. His latest books "Michael Bloomfield Legendary Licks" and "Triads for the Rock Guitarist" are available everywhere and his latest cd "Desert Storm" is available on iTunes, Amazon.com, and CDBaby.com. For more info check out Dave's web site: **www.davecelentano.com**

I Wanna Be Todd

by Paul Gilbert



Paul Gilbert by Neil Zlozower Atlas Icons

I WANNA BE TODD.

I used to want to be Jimmy Page. Then I wanted to be Eddie Van Halen, then Randy Rhoads, then Yngwie Malmsteen. But now I want to be Todd Rundgren.

Here's why.

First of all, I love his records. There are great, interesting melodies and chord changes everywhere. From straight-forward pop songs (Crybaby, Hideaway), to psychedelic experiments (International Feel), to screaming rockers (Trapped, Love in Action), to soul-wrenching ballads (Pretending to Care, Hawking), to progressive art rock (Communion With the Sun, Sunburst Finish) the music and lyrics are sincere, intelligent, and very listenable.

Secondly, Todd has able to evolve from a lead guitarist (of The Nazz) into a musician. He sings, plays piano, saxophone, and drums and produces other people's records as well as his own. He even conducts.

Next, he's an amazing live performer. I've actually sobbed during his shows, they were so good.

And lastly, he doesn't seem to ever run out of new ideas. His last album is as inspired as his first or any in between, but in a completely different direction.

Before we became players we started as fans. So it's no surprise that some of the world's finest guitarists still have music crushes on their favorite artists. Paul Gilbert, a shredmaster and founding member of Mr. Big, is a fan of Todd Rundgren. Many years ago I invited Paul to write about Todd. This is what you see here. But just recently, and decades after he wrote this note, Paul emailed me this: "I just figured out the chords to 'Bag Lady' last night to show to a student. Todd Rules!" I rest my case.

WE HOPE *YOU* ENJOYED OUR FOURTH ISSUE.

We look forward
to sharing more with *YOU*.

TELL US WHAT *YOU* THINK!

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